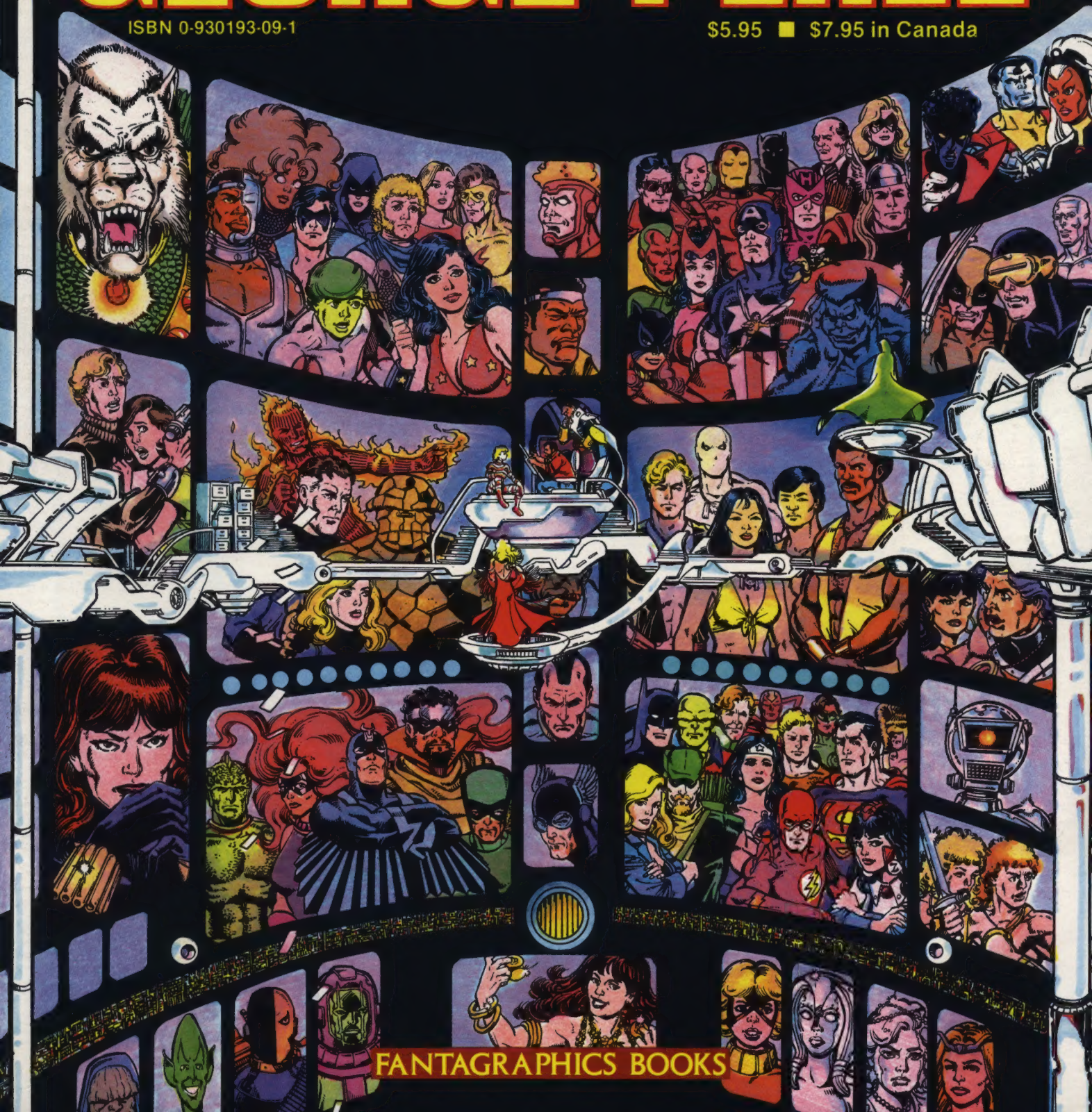
FOCUS ON

GEORGE PÉREZ

ISBN 0-930193-09-1

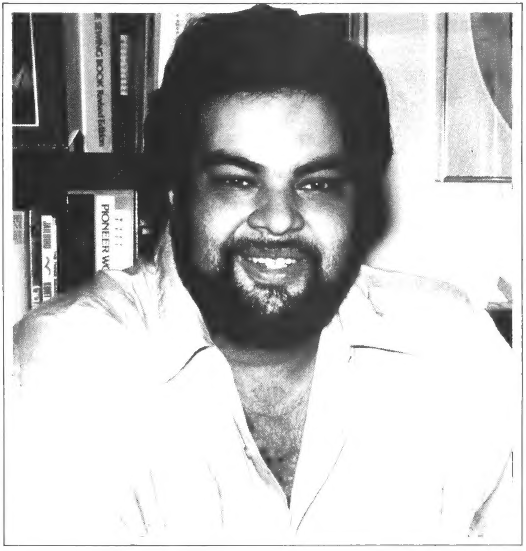
$5.95 ■ $7.95 in Canada



FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS

FOCUS ON

GEORGE PÉREZ



FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS

FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS
4359 Cornell Road
Agoura, CA 91301

Special thanks to Dick Giordano at DC Comics and Sally Pomeroy of Marvel Comics Group for allowing the reproduction of the JLA/Avengers pages in this volume.

Also, thanks to Andy Christie for typesetting and proofreading; Art Cover for loaning us lots of funnybooks; Arlene Easter and Linda Gorell for typesetting; Tom Heintjes for the harassment; RFJ for supplying lots of art; Henry Mayo for coloring the cover; Dave Olbrich for promotional efforts and watermelons; Kim Thompson for riding herd; Mark Thompson for intrepid production work; Gabriel Vega for loaning us a ton-o-comic books; Gary Groth for giving the green light; and it goes without saying, thanks to all contributors for diligence and patience.

But above and beyond all this, most sincere thanks to George Perez, a gentleman in the truest sense of the word, for his cooperation, time and exceptional career that spawned this book.

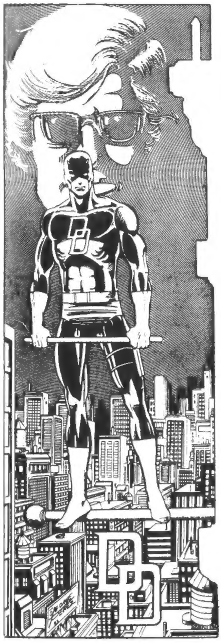
All rights reserved. Permission to quote or reproduce material herein for reviews or notices must be obtained from Fantagraphics Books, Inc., in writing, at 4359 Cornell Road, Agoura, CA 91301.

First Fantagraphics Books edition: August, 1985
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

ISBN:0-930193-09-1

Printed in the U.S.A.

CONTENTS



Editor:
Tom Heintjes

Art Director:
Tom Mason

INTRODUCTION
DAN DEUSCHE heads up this volume with reminiscences ... 7

THE GEORGE PEREZ INTERVIEW
HEIDI MacDONALD raps with George about his whole career 8

THE EARLY DARNED GOOD ARTIST
LOU MOUGIN on George's early years in comics ... 40

THE KEEN TEENS
MARK WAID and R.A. JONES wax eloquent on the Titans ... 46

IN SEARCH OF PEREZ'S STORYTELLING
R.C. HARVEY on the success of George's technique ... 58

AVENGING ARTISTRY
R.A. JONES takes a mighty look at George's Avengers ... 64

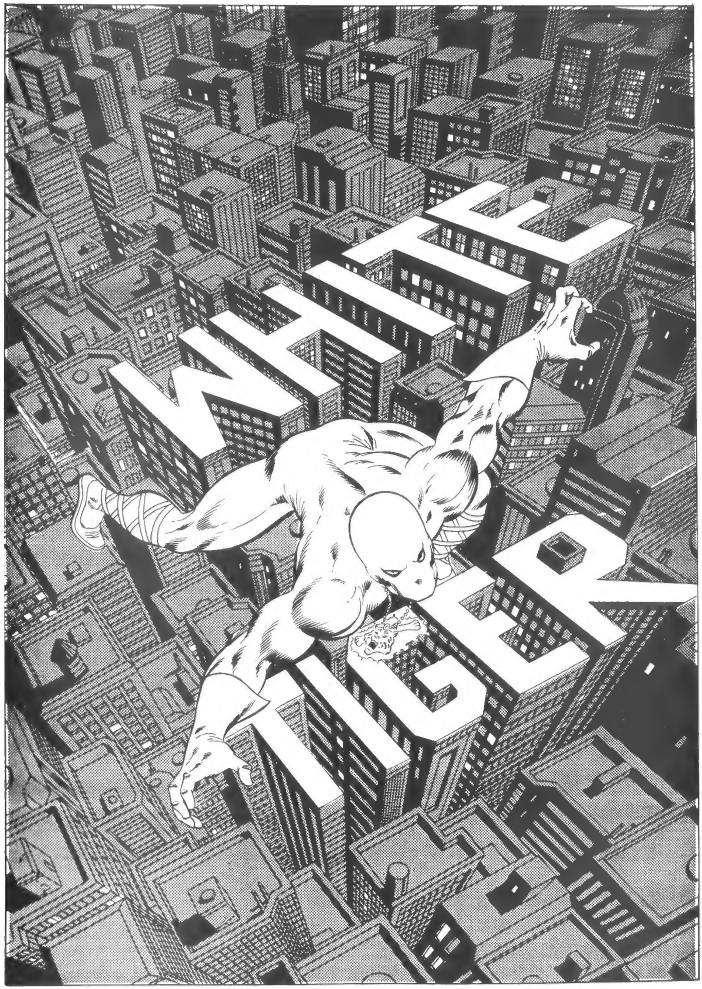
PEREZ'S RUN
LOU MOUGIN gives a retrospective on a short but sweet success 74

AN EXERCISE IN RAW POWER
MICHAEL METTLER on George's stint on the Fantastic Four 78

THE PEREZ CHECKLIST
A truly monstrous listing of *all* of George's work, compiled by ANDY MANGELS ... 85

THE PEREZ PORTFOLIO
A showcase for some of George's finest work, including *JLA/Avengers* pages! ... 101

ALL ABOUT GEORGE
ANDY MANGELS reveals some little-known facts about the man of the hour ... 118


WHITE
TIGER

INTRODUCTION

For a guy who claims to be an "insecure artist," George Perez certainly is making his own niche in a new generation of comic-book artists. It is a tribute to the man's single-minded obsession with perfection that he was able to take one of the least-popular super-teams at DC Comics, and visually revamp and revitalize it until it became that company's most popular book.

I remember the first time I was exposed to Perez's artwork. My teenage budget would allow only a few four-color fixes each month, so I had fallen into the habit of reading my two childhood favorites, *Spider-Man* and *The Fantastic Four*. I had grown complacently satisfied with the art of Ross Andru and Mike Esposito in *Spider-Man*, but I also recall some strange things happening with the art in *The Fantastic Four*. Some "newcomer" named Perez had been coming on for a few issues at a time, adding an intensity and flavor to the artwork that hadn't been present since the glory days of the King, Jack Kirby. After a few short two- and three-issue stints that amounted to kick-starts, Perez was on *The Fantastic Four* for a year, except for an occasional interruption.

Although it was partly the nostalgia that the *FF* holds for me, I could also see that Perez "had" what a lot of his colleagues didn't—an obsession with detail and realism, and more importantly, the patient craftsmanship—I mean, who hasn't heard of Patented Perez Rubble? The man obviously enjoyed what he was doing. From that time, I bit the bullet, stretching my comics-buying budget so I could follow Perez wherever he cropped up next. After a spotty but impressive run on *The Avengers*, I had been informed that Perez was jumping ship to DC, where he would take over, with ex-Marvel scripter Marv Wolfman . . . *The New Teen Titans*?! Hmm. I cogitated at length. Something was up, I concluded.

Well, Perez and Wolfman turned the non-believers around. They took a group of the least interesting, second-string characters in the DC Universe and made them beloved throughout fandom. In fact, they're beloved beyond fandom, as President Reagan saw fit to have the Titans endorse his national anti-drug abuse campaign. Miraculously, the creative team was able to lift the concept of the super-team out of its stereotyped idiocy, and make it say something meaningful to its readers.

But they say that all good things must come to an end, and so it is with Perez's tenure on the *Titans*. He recently stepped down as both penciller, co-editor, and cover artist on the book so that he could devote his energies to other challenges. Foremost among these is the *Crisis on Infinite-Earths* book, which Perez has said will be the best work of his career. Judging by the first two-thirds of this mammoth undertaking, he's well on his way to doing it.

Talking to Perez is to learn something about the gentleman behind the drawing board. His childlike enthusiasm for comics is contagious, and if all of his ideas and future projects come to fruition, the second volume of *Focus On: George Perez* can't be *too* far away.

—DAN DEUSCHE

THE GEORGE PEREZ INTERVIEW

HEIDI MacDONALD: *Well, let's start at the beginning here. You've said you were born to be a comics artist.*
PEREZ: Yeah.
MacDONALD: *When did you realize this?*
PEREZ: Well, I was drawing since I was five years old, and I had been reading comics for as long as I could read. In fact, comics helped teach me how to read. I guess I really felt the urge of making comics into a career, as opposed to something I'd had as a hobby, in my freshman year of high school, because it was the first time I actually met real, bona fide comic-book fans. The type of people who went to conventions, which I had not been familiar with at the time. And they were real gung-ho fans who had a desire to become professionals as well, and they got me into my very first convention, the first *Star Trek* Con, as a matter of fact. And, from that point, I was hooked, and I knew I was going to make comics my career.
MacDONALD: *What was the element that enticed you into it?*
PEREZ: Oh, it was not only the excitement, but the first feeling of getting criticism, both negative and positive, by people who knew what they were talking about. When you're the only artist in a school of non-artists you're the star of the show. But getting actual criticism, in some cases rather raw, raking criticism, was both eye-opening and traumatic. It made me feel a little upset, because I had never been criticized like that before. But due to the fact that some of those same

Cyclops, done by Perez at age 13. You've come a long way, baby.

people offered that I should keep working at it, and they gave me a bit of encouragement, plus one person who was publishing a fanzine wanted to use my work, I started feeling, "Oh, hey," you know?
MacDONALD: *Right, right.*
PEREZ: This is a really exciting element. Also, I worked with enough professionals, for one thing, to see how they normally interacted with fans, but I kind of liked the idea of my name in print, and people knowing who the hell I was. I figured if I knew people who did the books because of reading the credits, they were like celebrities to me. And boy, I'd sure love to see my name in print like that.
MacDONALD: *Sure, it's a field where you do get interaction, and now, of course, you're superstar George Perez.*
PEREZ: I'll try not to think of that.
MacDONALD: *Yes, yes.*
PEREZ: Too much responsibility.
MacDONALD: *Okay, so then you decided that you were going to be a comic-book artist. How did you go about breaking in?*
PEREZ: Well, I started doing minimal fanzine work. Due to my high-school commitments, I didn't have as much time to do fanzine work. But I kept on practicing and drawing. My first fanzine work was for a totally obscure fanzine called *Factors Unknown*. They'd print like 250 copies. It was published by a couple of guys named James Landon and Patrick O'Neill, who now does work for the *Journal*, for *Amazing Heroes*, as well as for *Marvel Age*. I got in with a guy whom I'd met in high school, a guy named Tom Sciacca. And, I did work with my high-school yearbook, my high-school paper, and, when they were doing the Junior Bullpen thing, I had just gotten out of high school, I believe this is 1973. And I went and applied to the Junior Bullpen. Didn't get accepted, but I met Sal Quartuccio, who was doing strictly fanzine work at the time, who introduced me to Rich Buckler. And Rich Buckler saw my work, and after a dry spell of trying to get in, I met Neal Adams, met Dick Giordano, got the "Thanks, but no thanks," thing for a while. Rich called me up at my job, I was working at a bank. Or I called him, I can't remember exactly the details,

Pin-up for the amazing Amazon, done for **Wonder Woman** #300.

but he needed an assistant, and I ended up getting in through the back door by becoming one of Rich Buckler's many assistants during his most prolific period. And, less than a year later, after being fired from the bank job and working with Rich, and I got my first professional assignment solo, within a week after I got fired from the bank. So I had been unemployed for the grand total of one week in my entire life.

MacDONALD: *So it all just fell into place then?*

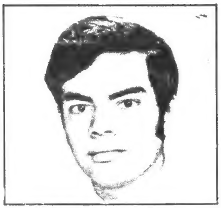
PEREZ: Yeah. When I first got my assignment, I was given *The Sons of the Tiger*, because everyone hated the strip, no one wanted to draw it. You know, let's give it to George.

MacDONALD: *Let George do it.*

PEREZ: Yeah, he's hungry for anything. And the same thing with the *Man-Wolf*. It was because George Tuska was busy on *The Planet of the Apes* black-and-white adaptation of the movie, and no one wanted to do *Man-Wolf*. The Man-Wolf was a shlock character. And so I ended up getting my first feature book, my first color feature, and neither one of them were going to set the world on fire, granted, but at least *Sons of the Tiger*, a very *hated* comic strip became the lead feature in *Deadly Hands of Kung Fu*, even over Shang-Chi. And *Man-Wolf*'s sales improved. Granted that horror comic books were on the decline, when you say "improved," you mean to say it went from worse to bad. But at least it showed that I had the excitment of just getting in, and it showed in the work. I was also working with two people who were writing, Dave Kraft and Bill Mantlo, so we were all starting at the same time. We had the freshness of youth, the enthusiasm of doing something, and characters that no one cared about. We were able to do anything we wanted.

MacDONALD: *The first book you really made an impact on was the* Avengers.

PEREZ: Yeah, as it turned out, when I was still on the *Man-Wolf*, and *Sons of the Tiger*, I wanted to do the *Avengers*. At the time Steve Englehart was looking for a new artist, and again, I had no reputation for me to fall on, but it was just that I wanted to do it. And



Perez's high-school graduation photo, 1972.

at this point Steve, I guess, figured that the young person who was really interested in doing that book, because the *Avengers* is not a book that anyone really wanted to draw, because it was a lot of work, a lot of characters in there. So I volunteered for that. Because of the fact that I had worked for Rich Buckler, and he was having deadline troubles, I received a call asking me to do an *F.F.* story, which was supposed to be an annual, instead of being two regular issues of the book. And, around that same time Bill Mantlo called, saying that he wanted to do a series of *Inhumans*, which would have been due a month ago then. This is during the time when I was the young kid who can whip out those pages like no one.

MacDONALD: *Yeah.*

PEREZ: So, *Man-Wolf* got cancelled, and I ended up having the *Sons of the Tiger*, the *Inhumans*, the *Avengers*, and the *Fantastic Four* all given to me at the very same time. So I was doing three-and-a-half books a month —the *Inhumans* was a bi-monthly series. So, all of a sudden everyone got to see my name. Unfortunately, as with anyone working that fast, and that young, I still had a lot to learn, so that the work was the best that I could do under those circumstances, but if I had like one book to do, maybe I could have done better. But I think by having to do all that work, I had to learn a lot quicker.

MacDONALD: *How many pages a day were you doing?*

PEREZ: I was doing a minimum of five pages a day. Now, in full pencils, I could do about two, one and a half to two at most, in full pencils, and those were done full pencils. Comparatively, my pencils are a lot fuller now [*laughter*]. I remember when I first started working there, when I was doing the *Sons of the Tiger*, I had an editor named Marv, and Marv was constantly criticizing my work. I hated that. He knows it, too. It'll be no surprise when he reads it. He used to get me so angry because he criticized things about my story-telling, my backgrounds, my lack of knowledge of perspective, anatomy. It was all the really basic stuff I was drawing. I never had an art lesson in my life. I was learning as I went, as I always did, I was always learning as I went along. If nothing

Staff artists of **The Challenger** Perez's high-school newspaper. Perez is on the far right.

else. I owe a lot of my quick improvement to just wanting to show off to Marv Wolfman. I was determined that, when he pointed that out, I'd get angry. One thing about a young artist is, as with many young fans—it's basically the same thing—is that we have a hard time with our pride. We don't like to admit to ourselves that we are lacking in certain skills. But I had to prove to Marv Wolfman, for one thing, he was my editor, that I could do the things that he said I was having trouble with, and that he said I probably couldn't do. So I finally shut Marv up, as he put it, by handing in . .I believe it was around #21 or something of *Deadly Hands of Kung Fu*, a down-shot, Will Eisneresque—it was a *White Tiger* page, with the letters formed out of the buildings themselves, which was a perspective shot, with hundreds of buildings, something that became a trademark of mine later on. But finally, I did something that finally shut Marv up. And, amazingly enough, in the entire time I was working with Marvel, I have only worked with Marv Wolfman as a writer twice, and now he's the one I've worked with the most, out of any writer in those companies, out of all those at both Marvel and DC. But Marv and I go back a long ways from brutal editor to struggling artist, and struggling artist to collaborators

MacDONALD: *How about the White Tiger? Were you involved in his creation?*

PEREZ: Oh, yes. Since I am Puerto Rican, Bill Mantlo, who always did very socially and politically conscious, wanted to do a story that featured a Puerto Rican character so that he could deal with the Puerto Rican experience. He had someone he could tap as far as information. So he and I talked about creating a Puerto Rican character for the *Kung Fu* strip. And he came up with the name "White Tiger," I came up with the alias and family background of his alias. And he created him in a totally unprecedented move of having a strip called *Sons of the Tiger* and actually writing out the lead characters. And suddenly it became the White Tiger strip. Because we both thought we had done as much as we really could with the *Sons of*

Spot illustrations from 1972's **Cardinal's Calendar**, Perez's high-school yearbook.

A Flair-inked drawing that Perez did in 1973 for the fanzine, **Conjure.**

the Tiger as lead characters, and they became background characters for a while, and the White Tiger opened up new avenues. Unfortunately, at that point, the other books that I had to do, I did not stay much longer on *Deadly Hands of Kung Fu* and I only did about three White Tiger stories before I was off the strip, and then I was replaced by a number of artists, starting with a young, struggling unknown artist named Keith Giffen, and then Jim Sherman, and Joe Staton, and Ron Wilson, and I came back for one final issue, in #30. My last hurrah, inked by Sonny Trinidad, who always sounds like a travelogue. "Come to Sonny Trinidad."

MacDONALD: *[giggles].*

PEREZ: And that ended up being my swan song on *Sons of the Tiger* and the White Tiger.

MacDONALD: *So how did you like the way the White Tiger* came out?

PEREZ: When I handled it, fine. It was the way he ended up, you know?

MacDONALD: *But I mean, were you proud to have him as the first Puerto Rican super-hero?*

PEREZ: Within the limitations of an action strip, I thought he was a good character. Until *Moon Knight* came along, I never saw the logic of a white character working in the dark. That was what I thought. Actually, black-and-white highlights never worked for the White Tiger. But the only thing I regret is that I wasn't a better artist at the time, and maybe the character might have made more impact had I been more secure in my own feelings as an artist and been even stronger as a plotter. I did plot with Bill on a lot of it, but the success of the writing on the *White Tiger* was mostly Bill Mantlo's doing. Because I really wasn't confident enough to suggest as much as I do now, and now I can't be budged.

MacDONALD: *Now, you had three different stints on the* Avengers.

PEREZ: *Yes.*

MacDONALD: *Set out over. . .*

PEREZ: In the course of 25 issues they got really spread out, yeah.

MacDONALD: *Yes, that's right, but over three different periods of work, what were those like—the three Perez eras on the* Avengers?

PEREZ: Well, the first era was obviously the young, foolish person who just went into it head-long. Of course, the one thing I had to get used to, which they did comment on, was that back then, I was still trying to draw a stylized George Perez style, trying to find a George Perez style, and I was sacrificing the look of the characters for it. Maybe they prefer a John Buscema approach as opposed to a Neal Adams approach. John draws the character, it's definitely John Buscema, but he makes the character look like the character, as opposed to Neal, who basically draws Neal Adams figures wearing the costumes, with no feeling for how the characters are supposed to be. I myself kind of like the Neal Adams approach, only because I could only make the distinction that it is his book and not anyone else's. But they wanted me to go closer to the house style. John Romita was art director at the time, and we said, there's a certain way of drawing Captain America, a certain way of drawing Thor, and I had to get used to that, that was the tough part. What I tended to do was trying to make it look like a John Romita or Jack Kirby Captain America, ditto with Thor, and trying to go very close to the John Buscema version of the Vision. So I was kind of uneasy at first, because there was really no Perez style that I was comfortable with, and I was still having trouble in actually drawing that I was a little uncomfortable at first. Enthusiasm got me through, but when I look at that with the realization that I still had trouble with the characters themselves, trying to make them look like who they were supposed to be, and yet still making George Perez distinctive. But that backed it up until about the 150th issue. When I came back briefly, when Gerry Conway was on, for the two issues I did with Gerry, I felt much more comfortable, although Gerry was very, very big with the Jack Kirby look. When everyone suddenly had this Jack Kirby bigness to them, and the panel forms and layouts weren't all that imaginative. And I felt that it looked fine, particularly since Pablo Marcos was told to use a very simple, streamlined style as opposed to the more feathery style that is

ormally his. It looked fine. Again, I was not really allowing George Perez to get out there. In fact, everyone wanted someone else other than what I really was. And even they couldn't say what style I really was, because I didn't know.

MacDONALD: *You had a stint with Shooter there, too, didn't you?*

PEREZ: Which one was that?

MacDONALD: *It was the start of the Michael saga*

PEREZ: Oh, yeah, that's right.

MacDONALD: *Then there must be four Perez periods. There was going to be a whole year-long saga—*

PEREZ: Oh, yeah, in fact, I was the one who suggested doing a big, monumental story with a lot of characters, because that seemed to be my—

MacDONALD: *—favorite thing. [giggles]*

PEREZ: I was coming back in full force, that was really a tightly pencilled job, and I was starting to get into fancy-schmancy *Star Wars* technology. *Star Wars* had just come out a little before then, so I was into the more detailed, high-tech look, and I really started getting comfortable with the characters at the time. I still had a few weaknesses. I tended to make the women a little too thick and everyone looked a little too chunky. And also, I was putting little details for detail's sake. I was still not knowing when detail became clutter, you know, cluttering everything in there. I recall a critic saying it looked like stained glass, with a brick thrown through it.

MacDONALD: *[Laughs] When did you first begin developing that kind of a stained-glass look, all the little details? I think that was what people really noticed about your work then—all the little machinery, all the little toggle switches.*

PEREZ: Around the *Man-Wolf* time, but as far as when it became really . . . I guess it was during the *Man-Wolf*, only because I believe I got a letter from somebody saying, "I like the way George draws," and I got carried away from that point on. I guess the first one was my *F.F.* story. The *F.F.* story is probably the one I was more conscientious about, because it came along long before the *Avengers* and the other story. The *F.F.* story was supposed to be an annual that got delayed, but they cancelled the *Giant-Size* that year, and it ended up becoming two regular issues of the *F.F.*

MacDONALD: *You also got very adept at drawing rubble. You know, broken-up buildings and stuff.*

PEREZ: Oh, yeah. Patented Perez debris.

MacDONALD: *Yeah, that's right, right.*

PEREZ: At first the rubble was based on Kirby. Kirby did great rock. And I just got a little more carried away. Also, when I worked with, I think it was with Rich Buckler, a German fanzine, they said something about, "If someone breaks a glass, have more glass shattering than ever could have been contained in that pane." Because it looks better. If you do real shattering glass, unless you draw it really clean, and then the inker will hate you, it doesn't look as dynamic. I mean, always go for excess or exaggeration. I just took that a few steps further. When anything broke, if I broke a vase, it would probably have to end up debris to make 10 of them. At first, I was doing it to fill up space. I felt I wasn't being paid to leave empty areas in artwork, which was a wrong attitude to have, but that was the attitude at the time. And I just had to keep filling things up, because not only was I doing debris and machinery, but I was also doing silly, artsy-fartsy design things, like little pebbling in the background, which would have absolutely no reason to be there. Crosshatching which would have no reason to be

Early Perez action from the "Death Squad" in **Factors Unknown** #3.

YOW!
CRAIG YOU SCALY BASTARD COME UP AND F... ME
NO! DON'T YOU DARE!
YEEK!
EH? TWO TRAILS OF BUBBLES
OKAY, OKAY I APOLOGIZE COME ON
OH NO

A She-Devil from **Hot Shot** #1, which was both written and pencilled by Perez.

there

MacDONALD: *Yeah. I remember that.*

PEREZ: It was just filling up space, until I realized that white was kind of nice, too. Color held nicely against white, you know. They couldn't convince me that that paper we were printing on was white. Still can't, actually. But, I thought, at first, it was just a way of filling space until *Logan's Run*. Since I was trying to draw *real* backgrounds, since I was basing it on the movie and it took place in Washington, and other things, I wanted to do actual, real backgrounds, and at that point, background became important aesthetically, as opposed to just filler. And from that point on, I became more careful as to how my backgrounds took up a page. And also, a lot of it depended on who the inker was. Because sometimes, if I put backgrounds in, if the inker inks it with the same line quality, or doesn't put just enough blacks and just enough weight, it does have, as you phrased it, a stained-glass look. The line quality of the figure and the background are the same, only color can separate them, and color against color is stained glass, with the dark lines. Those things started to bother me a little. When I started inking myself on the covers, and then finally on issue #39 of the *Titans*, I wanted wanted to show that there was detail in there. But even I would have the knowledge that when I was drawing, like when I drew the sequence with the Terminator and Tara in the snow—that I was not going to start throwing in these machines, just for the sake of having them in there. But I finally realized, "Okay, now I have to treat all the backgrounds as part of the action."

MacDONALD: *Just glancing through a couple of issues here, there are a lot of empty backgrounds, and more or less islands, islands of details.*

PEREZ: I guess my greatest sobering experience was my last issue on the the *Fantastic Four*, besides the Annual. It had the Human Torch in a car race in the desert, and battling a character called "Texas Twister." And all I had were a blank desert background, the lead character who's only a figure with lines, and Texas Twister, who most of the time was just a twirl of lines. It was the fastest story I had done at the time, because it was so easy to draw. That was probably the one thing that started shocking me. "Hey, I can get paid for doing less work." Of course, it never worked that way, I still end up doing more work than I ever get paid for, but it was the first time that I actually had to be forced not to draw backgrounds, because it wouldn't fit into the story.

MacDONALD: *Let me just ask one more question about backgrounds, because in your* Titans *work you always have put in all these beautiful buildings, and all the settings and backgrounds have always been very intricate. Where do you get all that from?*

PEREZ: Well, most of the buildings I get from my imagination. In some cases, if it's a real locale, obviously, I'll use photos. In the first issue of *Crisis*, most of the buildings used in the entire story are reference. I used photographs. If for nothing else, just to get a real knowledge of what a building would look like, and then break off from there. I mean, I wouldn't use photos all the time, because it gets very restricting. But, most of the buildings I design are totally from my imagination. The old Kirby panorama. Kirby never designed real buildings, but boy, they sure looked more interesting than most buildings were. Most of my buildings look like cigarette packs.

MacDONALD: *[Giggles] Yeah, but I'd like to go walking around in them, let me put it that way.*

PEREZ: Yeah, although you can't walk around them. Notice, when I do a down-shot, there are no streets.

MacDONALD: *Yeah, they seem to be just flying buttresses and columns off into space. Okay, so your final stint on the* Avengers. *I guess at the same time you were also doing the* Justice League, *weren't you?*

PEREZ: Yeah, that's right. I had just gotten back on the *Avengers* after a lengthy absence. Indeed, I had not been there since issue #171, over a year. And I came back, there was now a new writer in there. I went through more new writers on that series—this one was David Michelinie. And I came back again, feeling I was a better artist,

A promotional illustration for **Hot Shot.**

A bit of black humor from *Hot Stuf* #1's "Uncle Sal and Cousin John Go Planet Tripping," with pencils by Perez.

but I still had the tendency of stick characters, I didn't get rid of that until I was with the *Titans*, but I was really feeling a lot better with my artwork. I was very happy with the first issue in fact. It was inked by [Josef] Rubinstein. And the first part of the second issue was Dan Green-inked, and then, unfortunately Jack Abel's style has never been suitable for mine, so I wasn't real happy with those, but I was starting to feel better as an artist. The second issue of that stint was one of the few times that I actually used a real building in order to draw a fancy-schmancy semi-gothic building in the background. And I felt good about that, to think that I was actually spending the time learning to draw, as opposed to just resting on my laurels, just taking all the shortcuts. I had slowed down, but at least I was slowing down for the reason that I wanted really to draw. I didn't want just to be another person who was doing it as a job, I really did take the drawing seriously on it. It's just that my own limitations, my lack of any training always kind of held me back, and I said to myself, unfortunately, if I take the time to really sit down and learn this, I'll never get any work done, I'll go broke in a week. So it's still the constant learning as I go, trying to make the best of the situation, sitting down, taking a little longer, put the book behind deadline, having to take shortcuts again, taking a little longer. . . I kept going back and forth. I would slow down so that I can learn to draw, and then I have to speed up in order to catch up because I have to take time to learn to draw. The better I got, the slower I got, but I kind of prefer being a little slower and doing work that I'm proud of than speeding it up in order to get the books out on deadline. The companies don't appreciate it, but that's probably why, in the course of a year's time, I'll be off any regular assignment.

MacDONALD: *But at that period, you were doing the* Avengers, Justice League *and also the* Teen Titans *were beginning to start up, so, what was it like working on all of those different team books?*

PEREZ: At the time since I had just come off a divorce, and I was determined to rekindle my career. I think it was somebody coming to me and saying, "George, I heard you quit comics," that I realized, "I think I better get back on this, in a serious way, just to prove that I'm still active." So what I did was, I said, "Okay, take the bull by the horns, and had done *Marvel Two-in-One*. And I decided to get back on the *Avengers*. I announced that I was getting back on the *Avengers*. I had already done an *F.F. Annual*, I had done an *X-Men Annual*, so I wanted to get back to the book that seemed to be more synonymous with my name at the time. And, told them I was coming back, came back full-force, enjoyed it immensely. You know, getting that fresh start again, also, the fact that we were leading into issue #200, which was a big "Oh, boy! An anniversary issue!" You know, so far, every anniversary issue I ever had, something went wrong. Issue #150 was half-reprint, and as it turned out, with issue #200, I hated the story. David Michelinie wasn't all that crazy about it, either, it wasn't his original story to begin with. And we were as enthused as anything, and then Marv came up to me at Marvel's offices, and asked if I'd be interested in doing work for DC, which he was just starting at the time. And he mentioned the *Teen Titans*, which I thought was a *ludicrous* idea. I said I really wanted to do the *JLA*. If he'd guarantee me at least one issue of the *JLA*, fine, I'll do the *Teen Titans*, what do I care? I figured the book would be cancelled in five issues anyway. And, I started working on the *Teen Titans* story when I received word of Dick Dillin's death. That, plus the fact that all comics suddenly went up in page count, so that there was the equivalent of an extra comic being done, in a given month, it was about 17 pages' worth of extra work now. And, so something had to give, and since I wasn't going to give up the *JLA* before even starting

on it, and I couldn't give up the *Teen Titans*, at least until giving it a fair chance to die. So I was off the *Avengers*. As it turned out, it was also the only Marvel book of the lot. And, as my workload got more and more intense with the *Titans*, I realized that this book might have a chance after all. And of course, because I worked for a while on the *JLA*, I ended up not doing any more work for Marvel. I sent them a letter apologizing that, because of my schedule, I couldn't, because they were being very nice about the whole thing. I was technically a freelancer, but seeming to favor the DC characters. Basically, I sent the letter to make sure that I didn't leave out of disenchantment, that I left out of sheer lack of time. And, as it turned out, the book I went over to DC to do, the *JLA*, was another book that I ended up dropping. So, the book I went to Marvel to do, the *Avengers*, I dropped, the book I went to DC to do, I dropped, and I ended up doing a book that no one gave a chance in hell, including myself, of succeeding, and that's the book that I became most well-known for.

MacDONALD: *The* New Teen Titans. *How involved were you in the concept of the new characters?*

PEREZ: Conceptually, the characters were mostly worked on by Marv Wolfman and Len Wein, since both of them were the ones who were instigating the revival of the *Teen Titans*. Len was the one who wanted a mystic-type character, which led into Raven, Marv wasn't all that much into doing another mystic character, having done *Dracula* for so long. But, since Len was the editor, Marv said, "Okay, fine, we can work on that." The Starfire character was something that Marv did want to do, he wanted to have a strong female alien character, and the Cyborg character was just a popular concept. They wanted to have a major black character in the DC universe who could hold his own. And trying to sell it was still a bit tough until, for whatever reason, I said yes, and they went to Jenette saying, "If we do the *Titans* book, we have George Perez agreeing to do it." And we sat down, then I became involved, so I started becoming involved in the concept of the characters from that point on. I worked first from a visual point of view, devising the feline look to Koriand'r, off the basically Red Sonja look at first. Joe Orlando was the one who came in after seeing the original drawing and saying, "Make her hair a little longer," and little did he know what he wrought. And, the Raven and Cyborg characters, like Starfire, were designed once. They were all designed once, like Raven's costume, which was a slight modification of my own choice. But they said, "Design a few designs per character." To me, that seemed like work. So I designed them once, and I figured if they didn't like it, then they could show me what they did want. That's a lot easier than trying to second-guess them without really knowing if the first one was all right or not. And they bought all the character designs. Len was the one who mostly did the modifications for Changeling's costumes. I had that little fake belt buckle put in the middle. It was just the basic design of Spider-Man's costume, and so we had to put trunks on him, and that little belt buckle in there, just to break that area of white, because it was obviously going to be attributed to the old, original costume. And my one big suggestion for Changeling was that I was not going to have his hair come onto the character, whatever creature he'd turned into, and the fact that we could have a green face on a regular body, I thought that was rather silly. So we decided to go with the full green character.

MacDONALD: *Before that what he changed into wasn't all green?*

PEREZ: Right. When he was Beast Boy, he would turn into, take an example, an orange tiger with a green face, and his own hair.

MacDONALD: *[Laughs]*

PEREZ: There was this green face on the top of an animal.

MacDONALD: *Yeah, that must have looked rather silly, I must say.*

PEREZ: If we're going to revive this character, let's not get ridiculous about it. And starting from about issue #8, probably, was the real first issue that I came in as a full plotter. Marv and I both really felt that if this strip sold after issue #8, then we knew we'd gotten a special book on our hands. Issue #8 was a very well-received issue. It allowed us to open up a lot of subplots into it, using the characters. From that point on, I knew this was the book I was going to stay on, for, at the time, a long foreseeable future. I thought it was going to be a lot shorter, but that's

Pendulous ponderings in **Oracle** #1's "Death Star." Pencils by Perez.

...AND BLASTS A GAPING HOLE IN HER FINAL AGRESSOR!
A SINGLE TEAR FOR HER LIFE-LONG COMPANION JOINS THE SWEAT OF BATTLE ON HER FACE...
BUT ONLY ONE-- THERE IS NO TIME TO MOURN-- ONLY TO GATHER HER EQUIPMENT...
...AND HEAD FOR THE SHIP.

From the action to the lull, Perez's storytelling was deft even in the early '70s—though the best was yet to come.

when the real enthusiasm came on.

MacDONALD: *How did your relationship with Marv develop over this period?*

PEREZ: Well, you know, we were working together. As it turned out, we were living very close to each other at the time. We developed respect for each other, we developed a friendship. From two people who barely knew each other at all at Marvel, we developed a very close relationship as a team, and as friends. And also, it gave us an enviable position as far as co-creators were concerned. We had both come off critically acclaimed series—in my case, the *Avengers*, in his case, *Dracula*. Plus, he had had his day in the sun, as had I. But neither of us had an ego-stroking by doing the *Teen Titans* series as a way of making it a George Perez book or a Marv Wolfman book. Or even making it into a Wolfman-Perez book. Just the fact that we had to make the *Teen Titans* successful in their own right, so we never had to worry about egos being bruised. Marv would be as open to making suggestions on things I could do as I would to things I thought he could do in writing, certain challenges that I'd figured. I talked his way in the artwork, so that he had to do something that he might not have thought of doing before, and ditto with me. I mean, he knew that I was not going to be afraid of a challenge. I'd never back out of work as far as comics were concerned. I would not be taking shortcuts. And if I wasn't going to be taking shortcuts, neither was he. So we ended up having a very good working relationship, to this day. Obviously, I still work with Marv, it has not been a question of trying to b.s., of trying to fight each other to produce something that we both feel would be better. We're pretty good at second-guessing each other now. A perfect example is the "Who Is Donna Troy?" story. Almost on the same day, we called each other with the idea of doing a detective story to find out who Donna Troy is, and doing it from Dick Grayson's point of view. It grew to the nice "detective/love story" as I call it, from that. But the fact that we both had the idea of doing that, because it seemed logical for the character, meant that the characters were taking us over at that point. I still enjoy working with Marv. I want to branch out, obviously, as Marv himself is doing. I'd like to try to get a bit of writing in on my own, as I intend to. And eventually, work with other people, if nothing else, like he's doing all the time. He's had opportunities to work with other artists, and I've not worked with other writers.

MacDONALD: *Hmm. That's true.*

PEREZ: Except for one story with Len. And some stuff I did for Atari with Roy [Thomas] and Gerry [Conway]. But really, I have not worked with another writer in a long while. Eventually, I will again. The relationship has been very, very good with Marv. It's rather rare, I think, with a lot of creative teams these days, I think we've proved

that you can do a successful book. If we took the fanfare really seriously, we'd have our heads swelling to the skies. It's just a comic book, without it meaning to sound derogatory, but it's not more important than life itself, and the book is successful because of the effort that we put into it as a team. If either one of us leaves, whether the sales are affected or not, it's going to be based on the fact that the other person knows that he still cannot put less than his best effort in. If Marv had left, I'd still have to produce the best I could. Now I'm gone, and now Marv is still producing the best he can. If he finds someone else to work with him, in the same manner of putting his all into the script, then I can't see it failing just because the artist wasn't doing what he wanted.

MacDONALD: *Okay. I want to get back to that, but I also want to get into you and Marv co-plotting it.*

PEREZ: Well, we co-plotted a lot. Eventually Marv stopped writing plots, because we would sit down and talk it over. I can hold about five plots in my head at the same time. I would draw the book, based on what I remembered from the plot, and use everything. Marv has a terrible memory. I would annotate the art. At first, I didn't even annotate it. I would just let Marv figure out what the artwork was saying, and then do it, but sometimes I got a little too subtle and Marv misinterpreted the drawing. Then I thought of adding explanations. But it got to the point that we were co-plotting to such a degree together that we didn't need to write it down any more. He trusted that I knew enough about the characters to work totally from a verbal discussion. An indication of the type of integrity Marv has as a writer is, not only did Marv insist on my getting co-plotting credits, he paid me a co-plotting rate, from his own pocket, until DC arranged a co-plotting rate itself. We didn't take up bookkeeping, but Marv made sure that since I was co-plotting that I was paid as co-plotter. So I got half the co-plotting rate. Which means that since he gets the highest plotting rate of the company, I was getting half of the highest rate. It's an indication of the respect Marv and I had for each other.

MacDONALD: *That's wonderful.*

PEREZ: Yeah. I've had absolutely no complaints there. Working with him was very easy. We had a symbiotic relationship as far as writer and artist. Many times when Marv was at a loss, like the wedding issue and one of the issues with Blackfire, he gave me a very, very good back-up, because he was really bogged down with things. I would go on from that point, and actually do the plotting as I went along. The Cyborg story, from *Tales of the Teen Titans*, was also similar to that, since I know Cyborg and had a greater feel for Cyborg at the time. So many times, I get a chance really solo on him, but since Marv is still the major force in the writing there, he's still listed as the co-plotter. The book obviously always was a Marv Wolfman-George Perez production. It was the type of thing where even if one was visibly more Marv, if Marv did more of the plotting than I did, or vice-versa, it was always referred to as as Marv Wolfman-George Perez plot.

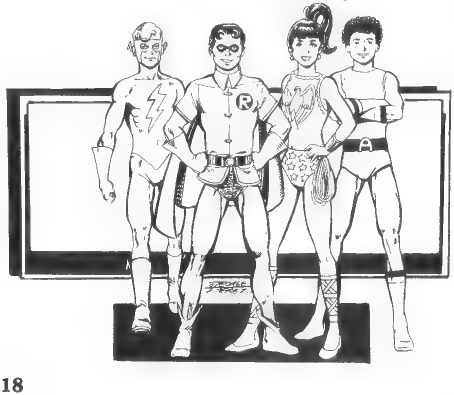
MacDONALD: *Okay. Now, then you were co-editors, how did that work out?*

PEREZ: Len Wein had a lot of work to do on his own. He was, I think, over-extending himself, and I was just content to have Marv Wolfman become the editor of the book, just so that Marv would have a greater stake on the series, as opposed to being one of the many books he'd have to handle without really having creative input. Marv was the one who suggested that I become co-editor. As Marv put it, he couldn't see himself, after so many times as a partner with me on this series, suddenly becoming my boss on this. So he gave me editorship, because he thought I deserved it. I was not experienced as an editor, in hindsight, I don't think I really did all that much to add to the book as an editor. I kept doing art corrections on the issues when I started to do layouts. But that again, that was Marv. Marv did not want the book ever to be separated as a team effort. He did not suddenly want to become my boss, and he insisted that I become co-editor. Crazy man, that Wolf.

MacDONALD: *Okay, let's just talk a little about your favorite sequences on the* Titans *and so forth. What were the high points of it for you?*

PEREZ: "A Day in the Life" was obviously the first real high point on it. Particularly the Victor Stone sequences and Kori sequences. Kori, the scene of her stripping in the park. That one scene alone shows Kori, as she was. For me, the biggest highlight was "Who Is Donna Troy?" Just to prove that a comic book didn't require a single

The original Teen Titans, from the 1983 San Diego Convention program book.



YOU DON'T VICTOR... BUT MY PARENTS... I MEAN, WHILE I'M LIVING WITH THEM, I HAVE TO LISTEN TO THEM... DON'T I?
LOOK, I SAID IT'S OKAY. I'M NOT ANGRY.
GUESS I REALLY CAN'T GET TOO ANGRY AT ANYTHING NOW. I KNOW WHAT I AM, AND I EVEN LEARNED TO LIVE WITH IT.
IF YOU'VE GOT PROBLEMS LOOKING AT ME, IF YOUR PARENTS GOT PROBLEMS, WELL, THAT'S YOUR HANG-UPS, NOT MINE.
I'M NOT GONNA DESTROY MY LIFE BY BEIN' BITTER.
SEE YA AROUND, MARCY. OR BETTER YET, MAYBE I WON'T.
IF THAT DON'T BEAT ALL.

One of Perez's own first high points in the Titans—the Vic Stone sequence from issue #8.

fist or punch thrown in the entire story. I even had a sensation of having her, in anger, hitting the wall of the condemned building, and I resisted even that, because I did not want a single punch thrown. The worst it ever got was Dick Grayson menacing the guy in prison. Even then, he didn't grab him physically, he did it strictly through intimidation. Also showing Robin's reputation. But that was a proud moment. Because it was something that no one thought really could still be done in comics any more. The characters were out of costume most of the time. On the cover, Robin's costume was almost obscured. You really couldn't tell, without the little "R" on his chest, who he was. It was a totally different one.

"The Runaways" was another one, because of the fact that not only was it a message, but it was also taking a look at the characters who were teens, and working from that point on. Also the fact that Victor was a runaway. It was also the issue where I decided I was going to start really doing covers in a big way. And I really thought of becoming ambitious in covers, so I would go into production and find out what I could or couldn't do on covers. If nothing else, just to give the best I can, because I was really getting hooked on inking those things, and I really wanted to produce the best I could on the covers. As far as doing covers, "The Runaways" was the first of the few when I really started going to town on this.

MacDONALD: *I've always loved your covers, George, I must say.*

PEREZ: Thank you. I really put every effort into those. I'm one of the people at DC who designs my own. Ed Hannigan designs a number of others, I design my own. "Grow my own covers." The wedding...

MacDONALD: *Yeah, I was going to say, the wedding. Let's talk about the wedding a little bit. You were co-plotters there. How much of that was yours?*

PEREZ: That one was a lot more mine than usual. Only because Marv had never had a large wedding. My first marriage was a large affair. I remember all the political, familial, and other types of intrigues that go into a wedding. The nervousness... the pain, even in the happiest occasions—

MacDONALD: *Sure.*

PEREZ: I told Marv I was going to put the Harlequin in there because I knew the Harlequin was one character that Marv definitely wanted to disavow ever existed. And I said, "No, no, no, the greater challenge is to try to explain why this character is invalid, like maybe explain that she's not the Harlequin." Which is what we ended up doing—saying she's not Two-Face's daughter, but not saying anything else beyond that. Marv was not fascinated with this, because it wasn't his idea, it was my idea, and I didn't want to put him in a bind he didn't want to be in. But he also doesn't take the easy cop-out by saying, "She didn't exist." The only thing we did change, in a scene that both of us demanded that we put in, was that Hawk and Dove were shown and "Boy, I thought you guys were older." [*laughter*] Little bits of dialogue, but I also did a lot of dialogue suggestions on that storyline, including that one. We both came up with the idea of how Mento was going to be our plot-ploy in order to explain why people are not worried about their identity being shown. And, since I knew more of the members of the Titans Fan Club intimately, in fact, I shocked a lot of the fan club members, I called them up. One time I had to explain that I really was George Perez. He couldn't believe it.

MacDONALD: *And so you drew a lot of fans in there?*

PEREZ: Yes, in fact, the four women who were ogling Dick and Bruce are four women who are big Robin fans. One's named Margie Spears, the other one's Tina

This scene, Perez says, "shows Kori, as she was." From issue #8's "A Day In the Life."

Chambers, Mercy Van Vlack, and Lucy Carr. And, with the exception of Mercy, Mercy's the only one I did not contact personally. I don't even have her phone number, but all of them I've talked to, and I know what their view are about Dick Grayson, so I had to do that little scene in the kitchen. The man who introduced himself to Kori is, obviously, a big Koriand'r fan, and has a lot of Kori art from me that he's bought, including the pin-up shot that was the first page of issue #42. He owns that piece of art, so I had to put him in. He had to meet Kori. He sent a letter of profuse thanks for it.

MacDONALD: *Yeah, I was going to say . . .*

PEREZ: I'm glad that Mike Barr, doing Metamorpho, wants to go and bring back tradition by doing a lot of heroes and villains that go crashing. Marv was nervous about the book because of the fact that it was a 40-page story, and he had to try to hold the interest for 40 pages on nothing but characterization. Not only was I challenging him, but I was challenging me. How do you draw people just talking without making it look boring? But I was determined to do it. This was the first anniversary issue, with the exception of *JLA #200*, which I was very proud of, where I had some control, and I would sit down with Marv, and constantly reassure him, "It's going to work out, it's going to work out. Trust me. If we do it right—that was the whole question—"If we do it right, it should be a very good and well-received issue." And we put in the little extra capper of Queen Hyppolita, something that got added to the actual plotting of how we treated that. Originally, she was just supposed to have talked to Queen Hyppolita at Paradise Island, but we decided that by her going through all the effort, just to make Donna happy by coming and meeting the one person she couldn't meet on Paradise Island—Terry—made it much more emotionally charged. It also gave something for the reader to look forward to, other than the inevitable wedding. It was obviously established in the Baxter book that she was married, there was no surprise. And, the final capper, as far as really taking a chance, was the fact that none of the characters appear in costume on the cover. Just a straight wedding picture. No one appeared in costume.

MacDONALD: *It was a wonderful book. It really touched me.*

PEREZ: I'm glad. That's the effect we wanted.

MacDONALD: *I thought it was a triumph. George, I notice you like to draw happy people.*

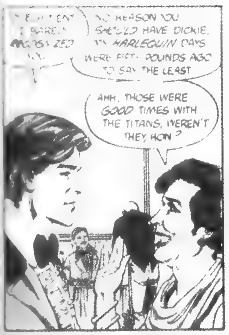
PEREZ: I love to draw happy people.

MacDONALD: *[Laughs] Yeah, but somehow artists aren't supposed to draw happy people.*

PEREZ: I like soap operas as much as the next person. The reason that I stopped watching soap operas is that I couldn't stand the depression all the time. No one ever seemed to be happy. So I figured, "Okay, soap opera is fine," but there is a point when anyone will get sick of it, at least any sane person, as far as I was concerned, would get sick of it. So if nothing else, there was a soap-opera element, they did go through their woeful period. But I have a very happy marriage. I guess my marriage is another indication. When I married my second wife, I have had such a good life that it kind of reflected. Suddenly everything I do no longer has a heavy, somber look. Everything's become a little lighter. I was determined, as was Marv, actually,

OOOHHH! FREE AT LAST, FREE TO FLY, FREE TO BREATHE. I LOVE IT!
THE AIR IS GETTING COOLER, BUT IT'S STILL SO DELIGHTFUL.
I LOVE BEING HERE. THIS EARTH, IT'S ALMOST AS MUCH A PARADISE AS HOME.

Fly! Be free! Also from issue #8.



A portly Harlequin shows up at issue #50's wedding—at Perez's insistence. . .

that Donna's wedding was going to be ideal, as far as her relationship with Terry. Not idealistic, in the sense that they never had arguments, but in the fact that they understand each other. He's not Steve Trevor, God forbid, he's not Lois Lane, you know, that type of relationship. They're two adult people who understand each other, respect each other, and genuinely love each other. And that whole thing has become a big thing in the stuff I tend to do. I tend to do a lot of happy stuff. Gar is. . . well, Gar is going to his dark thing too. I was the one who plotted out the sequence with Victor and his grandparents, for once not ignoring the fact that he's black. And using that as a major plot makes that a positive thing, the fact that these two grandparents are incredibly happy people. Marv came up with the idea of the show-business background, and the strange, mysterious background of them, which made them a lot of fun. We want to do a fun book, because we were very guilty at the beginning of getting a lot of really down, depressing, generation-gap stories here, and we really wanted to show that comics can be fun. We didn't compromise the integrity of the *Titans* as a book, we just showed the other side that's totally available to us. I like drawing the happy side.

MacDONALD: *[laughs] Well, I like looking at it. There's a certain school of comics that seems to deal with exclusively anguish. Say, would you ever like to draw a romance book?*

PEREZ: Love to! In a way, both "Who Is Donna Troy?" and the wedding issue was my statement showing what potential is still there on the great non-superhero romance stuff. More the wedding than the other one, but just the fact that two people really care. I think a lot of the problems with love stories is that the people who are doing the stories really don't care for the characters. But again, it's a one-shot, the character's a one-shot, they really don't want to spend as much time on it, thinking of how the character reacts, how this character would feel, and particularly how the woman feels. The women always get the short shrift on these damn love comics I've got. I couldn't stand reading them mostly because I didn't hate the women as much as I hated the way the men treated the women in those damn stories. Because it was always a male juvenile fantasy. If it were a male fantasy, make it a male *adult* fantasy. You know, make it something that relates to who these characters are, as opposed to writing love comics as if you're still aiming totally just for a pre-pubescent audience. Now, I'd love to do a love comic, I'd love to do a western, I'd love comics to be able to diversify again. And that was just my little attack on the *status quo*. It was a love comic. Terry and Donna have a nice, adult relationship, thank God! I think there are still

As do some Titans fans.

I THINK I'VE DIED AND WENT TO HEAVEN
HI, GORGEOUS. I WANT YOU
I'M A TITANS FAN
WHAT A TOSSA! WONDER WHAT HE MAGNIFICENT MOMMA'S
LOOKS LIKE IN SHORTS?

some in the world.

MacDONALD: *I agree. So you don't think that super-heroes are the only expression for your art?*

PEREZ: Again, not having had much chance beyond that, it's hard to say, "Yes, I'd like to. . . " Super-heroes are not the only thing in my art, yet that's the only thing I've drawn and I've made a lot of money on it. I intend to be doing six issues of *Wonder Woman* after I finish *Crisis on Infinite Earths*, and my intention is not to make it a Wonder Woman on Earth super-hero story. I want to deal with the Amazonian concept of the character. Mostly redefine it, to explain the Amazonians.

MacDONALD: *Let me just ask you—what did you think when you first heard about the hardcover/softcover plan?*

PEREZ: Well, when I first heard about it, I had wanted to get on a Baxter book, as far as the *Titans* were concerned, only because I was a little bothered that the two books owed all or part of their popularity from the *Titans*, *Vigilante* and *Omega Men*, both got the Baxter treatment, and the *Titans* were still being produced on tissue paper. And I had already expressed that I was really not happy with the reproduction, so that when they announced that they were going to go Baxter, I said, "Oh, great! It's what I really wanted." When they said they were actually doing two books a month. . .

MacDONALD: *[laughs].*

PEREZ: . . . that wasn't exactly what I counted on. We were going to convert the book to Baxter, and, as I understand the reasoning, Baxter books are not sold on the newsstands, we'd end up losing half our audience if we didn't keep them satisfied. Although why they couldn't print the two books concurrently and make it a choice whoever wanted to buy the more expensive book, I don't know. But they came up with the plan, and—pride goeth before the fall—I was really not enthusiastic about someone else doing one of the books, and my doing the Baxter. I really wanted to keep my hand in on the regular Mando book, if nothing else, because of the fact that we were heading into our 50th issue, and if I had left the book, I

MISS ANDERS. MY NAME'S MIKE PRICE - I GOTTA TELL YOU I BOUGHT YOUR POSTER THE DAY IT CAME OUT
IT'S GORGEOUS, MISS ANDERS. ALMOST AS GORGEOUS AS YOU ARE IN PERSON
WHY, THANK YOU. YOU'RE VERY NICE.

A fan who collects Perez original art also cameoed in issue #50

would have missed the 50th issue, after working all that time to get there. So I put a little too much stock in my old reputation for speed. Particularly, the mistake was made in my case, since I *did* want to ink the Baxter *Titans*, I was really not aware of how slow an inker I was, particularly with the amount of work I wanted to do on it, and still get good reproduction. So I decided to do full work on the Baxter, and just do layouts on the Mando book, which unfortunately was still too much work to handle. There was just too much work. All the detail work I wanted to do was just too costly. Both books started falling behind schedule. I can understand why no one else had volunteered to do both versions of their books. In hindsight it was a dumb thing for me to do. The only thing I can say about the plan as it stands on its own, though, is that it does give the customer a choice anyway, and satisfies the artistic side on the part of the creative team. If fans want to get the book now, if they want to spend the money, it's their option, no one's twisting their arm to do it. The collector's mentality doesn't work for me But then, when it comes out in softcover, as it were, they can buy it cheaper. It's going to be the same product, you know. The only difference will be the cover, because obviously the cover's going to be full color, and we couldn't do that on a regular basis in the Mando—

MacDONALD: *Will there be new covers?*

PEREZ: Oh, there will be new covers Chances are, I'll be drawing the new covers for the books that I drew. But beyond that, even though I did do the covers for issues #s 6 and 7, they will probably end up being done by some other artist, possibly the artist who has done the interiors. I don't know about Jose [Garcia Lopez]. Jose didn't want to do his own covers. That's the only reason he didn't draw the cover of #7 or any future covers. He just didn't want to draw his own covers. Lord knows we would have welcomed them. We tried to talk him into doing his own covers. I was surprised when I ended up getting the #7 cover of assignment.

MacDONALD: *I just got that today. You did that? It seems to be a photo-montage?*

PEREZ: A photo, right.

MacDONALD: *It doesn't seem to have your signature*

PEREZ: Yeah, I did design it. If nothing else, I didn't want the signature to take away from the white area. If they couldn't figure out who drew that cover . . . well, they could have guessed it might have been Jose, considering most of the picture was a photograph. Enough was apparent that it was mine.

MacDONALD: *On looking at it closely, I would know that. I just got it today. How did you adapt your work to the Baxter paper, I mean, was that very exciting for you?*

PEREZ: Well, adapting my work to the Baxter was rather easy, only because I wasn't inking myself on the regular *Titans*, except for one issue, and three pages of "Who Is Donna Troy?" So inking myself automatically made it a different approach, since I know I'm a much more detailed artist than Romeo [Tanghal] is, as inker or a penciller. So it's like, if I had done the Mando book, I probably would have done just as much. When I did issue #39, I didn't take any shortcuts there, either. I put in as much detail there. It's just the knowledge of knowing it's printed clearly. Also, one thing that was really different is not only could I do surprints, but I could do color holds with the Jericho effect. We could drop out every color under the white line, thus creating a negative image that held against all color. That was something that gave me a lot more options, interesting effects that I could do. I just found out, that after all this hemming and hawing, that for the Mando book is also capable of printing the same way

MacDONALD: *So that will be in the mando book, that white Jericho effect?*

PEREZ: Chances are, it will be reprinted exactly that way, because I just did a white effect for *Crisis*, wherein I was trying to figure how I could draw a good snowstorm without constantly drawing around what's supposed to be little white flakes. But of course colorists have to color around every one of them, and then I found out that I can do it. All I do is put little black dots, they'll reverse them, they'll come out as white dots against all colors and lines. So it's, "Oh, great, it'll really look like snow then."

MacDONALD: *[laughs]*

PEREZ: For all these years, I could have done these effects. I guess it's also an expensive effect. They don't want it, unless it's really necessary, in the case of *Crisis* book, they figure the book deserves the extra-special treatment. But all this time, I designed the blue Jericho effect,

discussing with Adrienne how to be careful not to have anything that'll contradict the blue, when all I have to do is use white all this time.

MacDONALD: *There would be no problem with the coloring, then?*

PEREZ: Yeah.

MacDONALD: *I notice how splotchy the grays were, more, I guess, in the coloring.*

PEREZ: Yes, the grays are colored k-tones."

MacDONALD: *Yeah, that's right.*

PEREZ: That was another thing. We got in extra colors, not only in producing grays, but gray as a way of muting down other colors. The first two issues were test periods. In fact, the second issue didn't have a k-tone, because the book was so late they couldn't afford to spend the extra time, that k-tones would have required, which is why the negative Titans' figures are done in zip-a-tone. I cut zip-a-tone out to make those gray figures. But, the first issue and the second issue had a lot of garishness to them. I always tease Marv for okaying the Tamaranian spaceship in issue #1, saying, "My God! They could never sneak up on anyone with those ships! No wonder they lost the war!" God! Bright red and yellow. We weren't used to the fact that the paper doesn't absorb any of the color. For the Raven nightmare sequence, those gray tones worked out beautifully because they muted everything. And, while her cowl, in the regular Mando book, is usually done by using a light red on blue to get a deep purple look, what Adrienne did for the Baxter title was to put gray into her cowl. And also, we started differentiating the brown on the walls of Titan's Tower. It's orange with a gray tone underneath, and Victor's skin is now orange with a blue tone underneath, so they aren't the same shade of brown any more.

MacDONALD: *[laughs] He can walk in front of it now.*

PEREZ: Exactly. And of course, the fact that the lines came out sharper, and the fact that when you have white, it's white. It's not gray, it's white.

MacDONALD: *The first time I ever saw Baxter paper, I think it was the white that was most impressive. Let me ask you now about the famous, or infamous panel. Whose idea was that, the panel of Dick and Kori?*

PEREZ: Oh, that was mine.

MacDONALD: *Uh-huh. And. . .*

PEREZ: Well, the simple reason that Dick is 19 years old. I was married at 19. And, Kori's age is indeterminate. Equivalent of an Earth 18-year-old, but their mores are different, and for her it was a totally irrelevant as far as the fact that she was at that age. Marv didn't want to go into a controversy on the letters page, but as far as we're concerned, and particularly as far as I'm concerned, they're both at the age of consent. Dick is not a fool, and if there were any chance of . . . them regretting the action later, they would have taken any preventive deeds necessary, but they are both consenting adults, and no matter what—the title says *Teen Titans*—at 19 years old, those two are legally adult.

MacDONALD: *Yeah, I was going to say, Robin has killed. I should say Dick. And there's more hullabaloo than when he's killed someone*

PEREZ: They're worrying more about the fact that he's gone to bed with someone whom he's deeply in love with. And the fact that when he kills someone, it was also protecting this same woman, it's like everything he's done that's been out

GREETINGS, MY DAUGHTER. AND THE MAN SHE LOVES. I HAVE COME TO GIVE YOU BOTH MY LOVE
M. MOTHER? IS BUT HOW?
OH, MY GOD
QUEEN HIPPOLYTA!
34

X'HAL! WHAT WAS THAT?
IT ALMOST DIDN'T SOUND HUMAN. C'MON. I'LL BUZZ THE OTHERS.
KORY--LOOK! IT'S A STORM... BUT A FEW MOMENTS AGO...
...IT WAS CLEAR. WHAT IS IT, DICK? WHAT'S HAPPENING?
I THINK I KNOW--BUT LET'S PRAY I'M WRONG.

The calm and the storm.

of character for him up till now, has always been because of her. Since a storyline is coming up wherein they go back to Tamaran, and I believe the jist of it—great of Marv not to take to hemming and hawing about it—is the fact that she's going to abdicate. She has absolutely no desire to return to Tamaran. She wants to stay with Dick, and we have to give her, as far as the readers were concerned, a full reason to stay on Earth. It has to be shown that Dick is not giving her a hard time, that it's unrequited. The fact that they are lovers gives her a legitimate reason to stay with Dick. Otherwise, it would be an insult to the Starfire character if she said, "I'll abdicate my throne," without us being really sure that it was worth abdicating. She does have duties, but the Tamaranians are creatures of emotion, too. And, that one panel, which I did as tastefully as I could, there was no nudity involved, nothing was shown of the act, it's just the fact that she was in what was established as being his bedroom, because I'd drawn the bedroom before. It's the bedroom set I have. And, make no question about it, they were in bed together, and...

MacDONALD: *And it wasn't because her bed had disappeared.*

PEREZ: It wasn't because her bed had disappeared, it was because of the fact that his bed was recognizable. I wanted to use a familiar room, so that you know that she was in there with him. As opposed to any vagueness as to whose bed that is. It's his bed, there's no question about it. It's established. And there were much fewer letters than everyone made it out to be. It got exploded totally out of proportion.

MacDONALD: *Oh, then there wasn't a great swell of outrage?*

PEREZ: No, Marv got a few letters. Enough to say that he had to print one, because he couldn't ignore it, but not in direct proportion to the amount of letters we get. It wasn't a fifth of our mail.

MacDONALD: *A couple of issues later, you showed evil Raven and evil Kid Flash, and that's okay. [laughs] Because they're evil, it's not like—*

PEREZ: If only for the fact that he keeps acknowledging that it's a bad thing for him to do. It's amazing how when it's a bona fide act of love people say we're condoning it. We would never have done that with Changeling. He's 15 years old, he's a minor. We definitely would never have done that. We do have that responsibility, but those two are adults. I don't know about you, but I definitely was in bed by 19.

MacDONALD: *[laughs] Okay.*

PEREZ: Since I was married, I certainly was.

MacDONALD: *Why did you decide to leave? The last chapter here.*

PEREZ: I was getting to the point where I wanted to do so much with my artwork, I was starting to slow down, and while enjoying the *Titans*, I realized that the *Titans* was stopping me from doing anything else. I couldn't do anything as long as I was doing the *Teen Titans*. And I really wanted to do other things. I couldn't do a graphic novel, even a *Titans* graphic novel, because of the *Teen Titans*. So it became a question that I was starting to become a little depressed, disenchanted with my situation, as opposed to the book itself, and I started slowing down further and further, the book kept falling further and further behind schedule. I didn't want to develop a reputation of Brian Bolland. At least Brian is slow because he's really meticulous. I was becoming slow because I was becoming disenchanted. It wasn't serving the book any good, so I had that infamous day of going to the San Diego comics convention, when I made the decision. I had made the decision to take a leave of absence. It was on the airplane going to San Diego that I made the decision, that I was leaving indefinitely, and told Dick on the airplane I'm lucky he didn't jump out. And I made an official announcement at the San Diego show. It was just that I had to do other things, and *Crisis on Infinite Earths* was a book that was definitely something that DC would put a lot of stock in, and for better or for worse, I figured I could put my two cents in there, and after losing the *JLA-Avengers*, I was determined to do one gigantic team-up book that I was really going to put my best foot forward in. And, that's why I am dropping the *Titans* and am taking on *Crisis on Infinite Earths*. But also, *Crisis on Infinite Earths* will also be my last regularly scheduled series for the foreseeable future. I am starting to get a little burned out, and I do want to slow down and take extra time on the work, and start inking the majority of my own work.

MacDONALD: *There must have been a little regret at leaving behind the characters.*

PEREZ: Oh, of course. It's one of those types of things that there were

Flash-frying from **Crisis on Infinite Earths.** The Flash's fate has been one of the major subplots of the book.

a lot of stories that Marv and I had mentions of doing, which obviously I will not be doing. Marv will be following through most of them. Some of them were my idea, and were results from the plotting sessions that we had, and knowing that, the Tamaran stories, the story of Victor going to an operation in order to try to get more human-looking, origin of Brother Blood, and a number of other story ideas that were just germs of ideas, including something with Raven, are stories that I will not be handling. I have visually in my head what I would have done with it, but that's as far as it'll go. Somebody else will have to do an interpretation. And at this point, I'm not sure who will be doing those. I know Jose is doing his last issue, and then he's leaving the book. He's returning to *Atari Force.** So tentatively, I think Ed Berreto is going to be taking over the Baxter one. It could all change tomorrow for all I know. I'm trying to put a hole in my schedule somewhere so I still will be able to do a comedy issue that Marv and I talked about. If I don't end up doing it, there will be none done But there's always that regret, of course

When I go to conventions, there are always questions, Why did I leave? When am I going back? is the second-most-asked question. And at this point, I wouldn't be back for the foreseeable future, the soonest I could possibly see is like four or five years from now.

MacDONALD: *Well, I've enjoyed your stay on it very much, I must say. You're on to* Crisis on Infinite Earths *now. What are the challenges there?*

PEREZ: *[Short laugh]*

MacDONALD: *[Laughs].*

PEREZ: Sheer size, if nothing else. Well, one thing that this book is different from the book I've been doing most recently, is the fact that this one is strictly my following the writer's whims on it. I get a written plot, that's fully plotted. I have no idea where it's going from issue to issue. For one thing, that allows me to be surprised when I get the plot. "My god! We're going to do this? We're going to kill him? Or her?" Whatever. I get surprised, because I miss the fan reaction to a book of this magnitude, of them taking it up for the first time and seeing these things and being surprised, and at least it gives me a little bit of shock. Also, I never know from issue to issue exactly what he's going to demand of me, to draw There were so many scene changes on that first issue alone. And nowhere as radical as the second issue, nowhere as crazy as the third, and the in fourth, we designed another some Earth that was supposed not to look like the other Earth, yet was supposed to be at least a 20th-Century Earth. So there's plenty of challenges here, and of course, it gives me a chance that with this, and doing the covers of *Who's Who*, of having drawn the grand majority, most if not all, of the people that DC comics prints or owns. So in that way, it is incredibly exciting. And it's also a book that definitely has an end. That's the thing I actually look forward to—to actually have a body of work that begins and ends, as opposed to, when I left the *Titans*. "Oh, you left the *Titans*?" I will not be leaving *Crisis*; *Crisis* will be finished. And it will be nice to have a complete body of work. And I'm tickled by the entire thing. Right now, the guest list comes off to something like 38 characters in lead roles so far—with the list growing.

MacDONALD: *What do you think of the flexographic press?*

PEREZ: Oh, I hated it

MacDONALD: *[laughs].*

PEREZ: Issue #2 will not be flexographic, it's going back to Mando.

MacDONALD: *Oh, I hate to say it,*

**Atari Force has since been cancelled.*

but I think it's a good decision.

PEREZ: Oh, I don't hate to say it. I warned them about flexographic when they told me about it.

MacDONALD: *Well, is there any chance that the bugs will be worked out?*

PEREZ: In the case of the *Barren Earth* series, it had very good flexographic. It's the fact that flexographic has to be changed, the plates have to be changed, every 90 to 100,000 copies. When you're dealing with a book like the *Barren Earth*, which only printed 60,000 copies, you don't have to worry about that, so you'll get the best results on it. For a book of this magnitude, wherein the print run of the first issue was 540,000, unless you're constantly sitting there, watching at the point where the plates are starting to go bad, you're going to end up with a lot of bad copies. *Who's Who* suffered the same way.

MacDONALD: *I'm just looking at* Who's Who *here. The big spaces have all this bleeding, and . . .*

PEREZ: Yes, the thing about *Who's Who* that's really sad is that there are copies that are printed perfectly. I've seen copies of the *Who's Who* that are printed perfectly. Unfortunately, most of those made it to the newsstands, but none of them made to direct. And direct is where the big market is for it. *Crisis-Earth* did not suffer in sales, because of the flexograph press, because people are used to bad printing in comics. But in a case like *Who's Who*, if you can't read the book, then the whole purpose of the book is gone, because the lettering bled and everything. So that's also going to letterpress, and they're just shelving the idea of flexograph. At least, so far as I know, on books with large print runs.

MacDONALD: *I noticed Marvel seemed to be making some very quiet experiments with it.*

PEREZ: Well, I think DC comes into it in a big way. No one had any reason to believe that it wouldn't work, because of the success of the *Barren Earth* series, or *Superman The Early Years* book. Flexograph worked fine. I do a lot of linework, and somehow that color looked a little garish for my tastes. *America Against the Justice Society* looked very garish. They had complaints, obviously, because of the *Who's Who*. The blacks bled, the lettering muddied up together. So, because of the fact that there was a snowstorm in Illinois, no one at DC could go for the final check. The book had to be printed sight unseen, and someone there took the initiative, without consulting DC, of lightening the black plates. Unfortunately, that gave them gray, and that fixed lines were dropped out, my lines were dropped out with Dick's inking on it. And, to this day, I have not looked through an entire copy of *Crisis on Infinite Earths* #1. I refuse to. I was so angry. I saw it, I picked it up at a comics store, looked at it, put it right back on the rack, immediately drove home, and called up Dick Giordano. It seems that I was the last one of the creative people to have seen it. Poor Dick was in the unenviable position of being angry because, as

Character sketches of Pariah, designed by Perez.

...other, his work was destroyed, ... he's going to be first to be yelled at, because he's also the executive ...ge, and the person everybody's going to complain to. So, he ...n't complain to anyone, he's the only one he could complain to. So he was between a rock and a hard place, and unfortunately I took it at him, too. In fact, everyone didn't attack as hard as I did, because he had review copies at the office, and they had the faded blacks, but they didn't have all the muddiness, all the blotchiness that I had seen, and the same thing happened with *Who's Who*. The bad print jobs were never sent to DC, they were sent to the stores. So DC thought the books were always better than they actually came out, when they started getting all this criticism. I think in my case they thought I was exaggerating, until Marv finally went to the store, one of the comics stores, picked up a copy and he said, "I saw colors there I never saw before." And suddenly he realized I was not exaggerating. I criticized the book for looking like it was done on a bad Xerox and colored with a crayon. And they thought I was just exaggerating, artists tend to do that sometimes with their work, but they realized that I was obviously seeing a book that they had not seen, and when they saw it, they understood my ire. I told them, in a fit of pique—in hindsight, I regret losing my temper as I did—but I told them that if another issue comes in flexograph, I will not be doing another issue. Because it's as simple as all that, I'm not going to have my work butchered like that. Unfortunately, issue #1 is irretrievable, there is nothing that can ever be done, so people can see exactly what that book should have looked like. We'll have to make it up with issue #2 and onward. Unfortunately for Dick, since Dick inked most of issue #2, except for three pages that [Mike] DeCarlo did, and most of issue #3, this was a great showcase for him, and, his linework never showed.

MacDONALD: *Well, it's too bad. It was an experiment. The results when it works are so striking.*

PEREZ: Oh, yeah!

MacDONALD: *So there's obviously a lot to be done.*

PEREZ: But at least the reaction to *Crisis on Infinite Earths* has been, from what Marv says, phenomenal. They've been coming in at the rate of a dozen a day. And the letters have been phenomenal, all positive, and surprisingly, very few people even comment on the printing. More people commented on the printing on *Who's Who* than on *Crisis*.

MacDONALD: *I think after* Secret Wars, *nobody cares how it looks. The fans don't. [laughs]*

PEREZ: Marv's been getting a lot of favorable commentary. He said there was about 70 per cent of the letters at the time making comments of what *Secret Wars* could have looked like, as opposed to what they got on *Secret Wars*, and seeing, "Oh, this is what *Secret Wars* is supposed to have been about, huh?" One smart-alecky kid said, "Well, as far as destroying universes, you want to destroy the

And the same for Harbinger.

MY, WHAT BIG GUNS YOU BOYS HAVE.
BETCHA THEY MAKE YOU FEEL LIKE MEN!
SO WHAT SAY WE DO SOMETHING REALLY MANLY--
SO'
--LIKE A GOOD OL' FASHIONED FIST FIGHT!
AWW, FOLDING UP ALREADY? GEE, YOU'RE NO FUN!
AND HERE I WAS ALL READY FOR A NIGHT OUT WITH THE GUYS.
FUUM

George Perez's premier efforts on Blue Beetle, a character DC purchased from Charlton Comics.

Marvel Universe, huh? huh?"

MacDONALD: *[laughs] Okay. You're also working on* Janus. *What can you tell me about that?*

PEREZ: Well, I will be working on *Janus*. At this point, all my energies are on *Crisis*. *Janus* is a pet project of Marv's for about, oh, 15, 16 years now. He's been wanting to do a supernatural-type story, which is what Marv does best. With a heroic figure who's supposed to be the son of the devil. Now, he's obviously used the Janus character who ends up being the son of Dracula. But he's had this story going around his head. It's something similar to Pandora's Box, I believe, and Janus has to get the world out of it. Or the world's totally under the corruption of the devil. It could have changed between now and then. But for my first graphic novel, I did not want to do a super-hero graphic novel. At this point, *Crisis on Infinite Earths* helped in the fact that it establishes me as an artist - George Perez, artist, whatever description, but *not* George Perez, *Titans* artist. By the time I leave *Crisis*, I'll have been off *Titans* for a year, but then again, John Byrne's been off the *X-Men* for longer than that, but he's still known as an *X-Men* artist.

MacDONALD: *Yeah, you'll never really escape it.*

PEREZ: Yeah. I don't mind being called "George Perez – *Titans* artist," but I'd hate to live with the reputation of "George Perez—*She-Hulk* artist" or something. There are some reputations you don't mind. I always used that as my argument when people said, "What do you say when people compare you to the *X-Men*?" I'd rather be compared to the *X-Men* than the *She-Hulk*. I'd rather be compared to something I respect. But I wanted to do something that was a little more chancy than doing a super-hero. *Crisis on Infinite Earths* is a safe book. Anyone could have drawn it and made money off it. But doing *Crisis on Infinite Earths* now, the royalties I'll be earning a year down the line, on a per-issue basis, will pay for my mortgage for an entire year.

MacDONALD: *What is the status of your plans on the* Teen Titans *graphic novel?*

PEREZ: There are no definite plans on it. Marv and I are just totally agreed that when we get a chance to do it, we will. I want to do a little bit of writing on my own, so I want to be trying some other projects. My first project, beyond *Janus*, is *Wonder Woman*. I want to try handling about six issues of her. Just to see if the book is success-proof. And to give the character a hand whether it'll sell or not. I hope that happens, that the sales figures show no change. If it goes down, I'm going to be crushed. But just to give the character a chance, I'll be writing it, pencilling it and inking it. So it'll be a full Perez job. Originally, I was just going to pencil it, and plot it, but now I really have a bug to write. Marv has offered me many times to write a back-up story in the *Teen Titans*, but I really want a book that I will not kill, in case I go wrong. *Wonder Woman* is a book where I can afford to fail. But it's my first shot at it, and I really want to write it. Wonder Woman, the Paradise Island legend, and trying to make some kind of clear definition of who these Amazons are, because they are obviously not the same Amazons of mythology. The mythical Amazons are too cutthroat to be really sympathetic characters: killing men off every time they want to get a new baby Amazon to the island just doesn't seem right. I'm trying to develop a new legend there, and if I can't I'll try to go a little deeper into Wonder Woman and Queen Hippolyta, as opposed to her just making a clay statue. There might have been

something more, like maybe a clay statue of someone who had died earlier. It had happened to her already. I don't know, it'll require a bit of changing of continuity, but not to the point of changing the character. I don't want to make anything so earth-shaking as suddenly make Wonder Woman a blonde girl named Inga or anything. Just basically play with her. And also to show the reason why Wonder Woman is not the female Superman, as most people who are not familiar with this character think. By having her go through a gauntlet, showing not only her strength and her agility, and everything else, but the things that make her an Amazon—love, wisdom, understanding. The woman. Just play with that.

MacDONALD: *Wonder Woman is really a super-heroine with a ethos, even more than just to do good.*

PEREZ: Exactly. Also, I want to really give a rationale for why the hell she's on Man's world. Because Steve Trevor ain't worth it.

MacDONALD: *[laughs].*

PEREZ: In fact, remember that whole thing about Tamaran, having to show that Dick Grayson is worth it? Trevor ain't worth it. He ain't worth anyone's trouble, particularly in her case, because he had to get back to the States, obviously, because he isn't Amazon. So, and that's going to be central to a lot of the storyline. Justify the fact that she's on Man's world. The fact that she bears a costume based on the U.S.A., a country founded by men. She wears high heels, the only Amazon to wear heels, heels being a sign of domination, all this other crazy nonsense. If nothing else, and maybe nothing to further Wonder Woman, but I'm someone who wants to handle it on both levels. Maybe there were writers who liked the characters, but then the artist wasn't too crazy about them, or vice-versa. I'm going to prove the book could succeed if they have at least a good-selling artist with the news that he's writing it himself. Usually they go, "Oh, writer-artist! Writer-artist!" They seem to have some strange, bigoted enthusiasm about any artist who decides to write his own work, even if he writes crap. Suddenly he's a wunderkind. So beyond *Wonder Woman*, and eventually a *Titans* graphic novel, if for no other reason it's demanded of me. I would love to do a *Legion* graphic novel, if I can sit down with Paul and just work something up. Or maybe if we could think of a good story-line, actually sit down and discuss what Paul and Marv discussed without my knowledge: A *Legion-Titans* crossover. Of course, I'm doing that on *Crisis-Earths*. I'd like the *JLA*. I haven't drawn Vibe yet, I have a certain bigotry towards Vibe, but eventually I'll have to draw him.

MacDONALD: *[giggles] Not exactly your favorite character, eh?*

PEREZ: Oh, I sincerely say he's the one character who turned me off the *JLA*. If nothing else, every character that was introduced was an ethnic stereotype. I couldn't believe it. I said, "*Come on now!*" These characters required no thinking at all to write. And being Puerto Rican myself, I found the fact that they could use a Puerto Rican character quite obviously favorable since the one Puerto Rican characters in comic that existed, the White Tiger, is no longer a viable character. But having him be a break dancer! I mean, come on now. It's like if there were only one black character in all of comics, are you going to make him . . .

MacDONALD: *A tap dancer.*

PEREZ: A tap dancer, a shoe-shine boy? Particularly when you're picking a stereotype that's also a fad. You're taking a chance that this guy is going to become very *passe*, his costume becomes passe because it's a breakdance costume, the minute the fad fades.

MacDONALD: *I'm astonished that breakdancing still is popular when there's a character based on it in comics.*

The first appearance of the Monitor in **Crisis.**

AND NOW, LET ME PROPERLY INTRODUCE MYSELF
I AM-- THE MONITOR!
AND I HAVE SUMMONED YOU HERE BECAUSE YOUR UNIVERSES ARE ABOUT TO DIE!

Perez's first efforts on the crew of the Haunted Tank

PEREZ: Yeah, isn't it amazing? We usually wait until three years after the fad has died. Look at the Dazzler. Disco Dazzler.
MacDONALD: *Yeah, that's the most amazing thing of all. I notice that you're still gravitating towards team books. If anyone is, you are the team man. The team supreme artist. Why is that?*
PEREZ: I like interaction between the characters. I've always felt the strong social urges. Man is a social animal, and I think it seems to be very dominant in my make-up. I enjoy the camaraderie of the characters. I enjoy the quiet camaraderie more then I enjoy drawing two characters in the same team fighting. I enjoy them when they're able to sit down and talk to each other, male to female, or man to man, or woman to woman. Just the idea of, in your own community, having a friend share what you go through, being a team worker, being involved. I love the idea of being able to share information with people who share the same background as I do, and the character interactions have always been fun for me. I don't know why, exactly. Maybe I was lonely as a child, and this is wish fulfillment, as far as having a gigantic family all around me. But I enjoy seeing the characters grow because of the relationship they have with other characters. Dick and Donna, I love them as a couple, I love Terry. I love them as brother and sister, I love Dick and Kori and then of course, Donna and Terry. Those characters became very important to me, and in the case of *Crisis on Infinite Earths*, that one went even further. It wasn't just that I liked the camaraderie, I tried to sneak it in. It's a little tougher in a book this size. But also the fact that this gives me a chance to do what I came to comics to do: to draw super-heroes. And I draw eveyone in this damn thing. In issue #7, we get to kill off a major character.
MacDONALD: *Who is it?*
PEREZ: It's Supergirl
MacDONALD: *Oh, no!*
PEREZ: She dies in issue #7.
MacDONALD: *Well, I guess Helen Slater did it, didn't she? [laughs]*
PEREZ: Yeah, well, she did as good a job as she could, unfortunately, the movie just . . .
MacDONALD: *The movie sealed her fate, didn't it?*
PEREZ: Yeah. She was a question mark, as far as the death list. Because Marv actually had a death list made, and sent it to Jenette, and there were some people who were checked, some people who were crossed off, saying "They may have potential," and Supergirl had a question mark on her. It was dependent on the success of the *Supergirl* movie. Well, needless to say, a week after the *Supergirl* movie came out, she was perfectly checked off on the death list.
MacDONALD: *She was worm food*
PEREZ: Yeah, the woman is definitely going to be 'gator food. I have no idea how she dies. Again, I don't get the plot ahead of time, I just know this one because in order to get me to draw the cover they had to tell me. I mean, to give you an idea, I have no idea where this story is going. The cover has Superman holding the dead body of a torn and frazzled Supergirl, and in the background Marv just told me to put in as many characters as I could think of. In the background, looking very forlorn, as long as they're all heroes. Villains don't care, we don't want laughing villains in the back. But I got everyone who was already in issue #1, in addition, I've also got the Phantom Stranger, Warlord, Amethyst, Deadman, The Spectre . . .
MacDONALD: *How about Swamp Thing?*
PEREZ: Swamp Thing, yeah, there he is behind Dick Grayson. Captain Marvel, Tomahawk. Kamandi appeared in issue #2, as did Sgt. Rock. The Creeper. Jason Todd as Robin. Omac, Jemm, Son of Saturn, Broot from the Omega Men, Doll Man, Gold from the Metal Men, Nucleon from Infinity, Inc., and on his shoulder's the Earth-One Atom. Jonni Thunder, Dick Giordano's version. Mr. Miracle, Big Bear of the Forever People. Cole, a new member of the Teen Titans. He isn't even going to appear until issue #9 of the *Teen Titans* Baxter book. Ragman, Challengers of the Unknown. Brainiac's crying, because obviously, he and Supergirl were an item for a while. Dr. Fate, Adam Strange, Jonah Hex.
MacDONALD: *Hmmm. Sounds like it's going to be some party*
PEREZ: Yeah. I don't even know how many there are. Probably like the *Who's Who* cover here, with all these characters. For *Who's Who* took up, the last cover I did, for issue #4, has 50 characters on it.
MacDONALD: *Fifty?*
PEREZ: Fifty characters, there are three teams that don't have indivi-

. And Jonah Hex.

DON'T YA REMEMBER THE GREEN COSTUME ON THET HOMBRE?
IT'S THE SAME ONE WE SAW ON ANOTHER GUY WHO CALLED HIMSELF A LANTERN OR SOMETHIN'
ONLY HE WASN'T NO COLORED MAN.

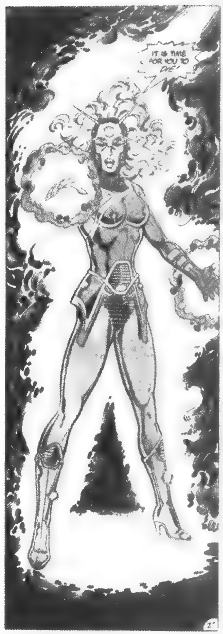
dual entries for their characters. The Cadre, from a *JLA* story, Challengers of the Unknown, and Camelot 3000. And all of them have to be drawn on that cover.

MacDONALD: *Your figures are very, very heroic, but they're human too. How do you do that? What is your approach?*

PEREZ: I don't know. It's a tough one to answer any more, because it becomes instinctive, particularly since I had no training. It's not something where I can make any kind of mechanical decision, it's instinctive. The only thing I try to remember is who the characters are. When there are all these big, bulky guys, I go back to the original way that I learned from comic-book drawing. And then you have people like Changeling, and particularly, any one of the Teen Titans, who are teenagers to begin with, with the exception of Victor, for one. But they should be more light than any of their adult counterparts, or anyone who's older than they are. The toughest ones are the women—making Wonder Woman a little older than Wonder Girl, and still not making her look like she's overweight by a few pounds there.

MacDONALD: *Well, I've noticed you do that very well, from where I stand.*

PEREZ: Well, if people ask me, in the case of the *Teen Titans* particularly, because obviously they're the ones I'm handling regularly, how tall these characters are, I can tell them. I knew it better than Marv. Marv usually got their sizes wrong. Then again, he never had to draw them. I decided how tall the characters are, in relationship to each other, and developed certain idiosyncrasies to their faces, then I had to try and get back to becoming a good enough artist on the *Teen Titans* to really get it down right. I mean, right so far. I'll probably look 10 years from now and say, "God, I didn't know how to draw then, either." But it's just the fact that when the characters seem real, it's kind of easy to figure them out. And looking at enough other artists, I pick up tips, sometimes subconsciously, sometimes consciously, on drawing certain things, making a character look heroic without being overly muscular. Certain things of



Scene-stealing, Harbinger-style

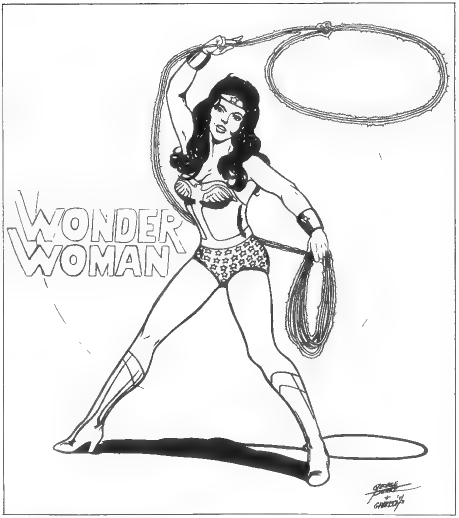
proportion, certain things on dexterity, on the way the characters move, and the one thing that, thankfully, I have an inborn sense of, something that really came in handy, is body language. I was the one who had the idea that Jericho had to be mute, with absolutely no thought balloons to make up for it. Just because I wanted the challenge of having to have a character that I could only handle through body gesturing, and Marv had to make a sympathetic character without him ever being the character to tell them. And to his credit, he himself was the one who added the touch that when he does take over somebody's speech, he talks in the other person's style, so you never do really hear what Jericho sounds like. So he took my idea further by doing that.

MacDONALD: *This is kind of a funny question, but are you familiar with Cat Yronwode's theory of neoteny and big eyes? In your art, characters have very big eyes, which is kind of a very appealing look for some reason.*

PEREZ: When I draw the big eyes, the wide-eyed wonder, it's usually in the characters I want to emphasize that they're innocent. That is valid. And during my tail end with Kori, her eyes did get bigger and rounder. I wanted to emphasize not only her alienness, by making her eye-shape totally alien from Earthling-shape, but the wide-eyed look. Gar's eyes became very large and for the same reason obviously for Jericho. Jericho looks like someone on *Spaceship Yamato* or something like that. They said he looks like something out of a Japanese cartoon. But that makes everyone look so youthful when they all have large, round eyes. I don't know if it's simply the fact that they're trying to make them so American-looking, so Anglo-Saxon, so occidental, that they over-compensate on the eyes, but in any case, it does give them a youthful innocence, and it is valid. When I draw Superman, definitely, this man's got tiny eyes. The man's far from innocent. I never see the Hulk with Bambi eyes. I haven't read Cat's article, but there's definitely a lot of validity in that, in doing Kori that way. Kori's round. The woman has roundness all over, and the eyes fit perfectly, you know. You only have to be careful with women, you can make them so grotesque-looking that they become caricature immediately, and they're already in danger of that just because they're built

MacDONALD: *In* Crisis on Infinite Earths *you're getting to design the costumes of some new characters. What kind of an approach do you have to designing costumes? Usually they're quite striking.*

PEREZ: I try to go for asymmetry. Obviously some symmetry only so I can remember what the costume looks like, so it doesn't just become a random bunch of lines. But I try to go for a little both asymmetrical and geometric designs. Perfect



A 1973 drawing of Wonder Woman.

examples are the Harbinger and Pariah. In the case of her belt, or actually, part of her top, there is a very symmetrical design to it. Yet I made sure that her sleeves were totally asymmetrical, and she has a sleeve on one arm and a bracelet on the other. The same thing I've done with Kori, which tricked almost everyone who drew Kori after me. They thought that she had two armbands. She never did, she never has, I've never drawn her with two armbands, she only has it on that one arm. No reason that she'd have it on that one arm, it's just the fact that I wanted a slight asymmetry to make the costume interesting. I also like metal. There's a touch of metal in almost every costume. Even Raven. She has those two buttons that hold the cowl on. There's metal. One thing I've been trying to do a little more, is to try to make the costumes less conventional as far as super-hero costumes go. In the case of Harbinger, she's a little more traditional, but it's also such a carefully designed costume, as far as line difference, that I constantly have to keep looking up her costume, and I have to redraw her. It's confusing even me. I wanted it to be individual. Not that the costume is made for comics, because when you design a character, know somebody else is going to draw it, you should make it as simple as possible for either their sanity or for color separation. So I just wanted to design costumes that don't really follow the rules here. In the case of Pariah, as with Jericho, I also wanted to make a costume that wasn't necessarily costume-looking. With Jericho, I accentuated the fact that he's not a straight action character by making him a costume with billowy sleeves that are not exactly what you would consider for a super-hero. Usually it's skintight, with the incongruous combination of trunks over tights. Until recently they were incongruous; now, obviously, dancers wear that all the time.

MacDONALD: They're in style now.

PEREZ: Who'd have thought we were starting a trend 50 years ago. But—

MacDONALD: *Well, that's something I noticed about your art. You seem to be paying more attention to what, the women are wearing.*

PEREZ: Oh, yeah. My wife works at an accounting firm, and they handle accounts of fashion agencies. She was a great help. She's also fashion-conscious without being trendy, so I know what works and what doesn't work. I was lasting up to issue #38 of the *Teen Titans* before she had the nerve to tell me that hip-hugger waistlines on women have been out for many years.

MacDONALD: *[laughs] That was just about when I noticed the improvement, to tell the truth.*

PEREZ: Exactly, yeah. Now I'm very fashion-conscious. Many of the things that Donna has worn, and Kori,—Kori's the toughest one to dress, because of her bustline—have been researched. I'd get out and I'd get magazines to find out what the hell are the women wearing these days, and using Carol as my assistant there. What clothing suits the characters? She knows about the characters as well as I do. What type of things would Kori wear, what wouldn't she wear? Though there's nothing that Kori wouldn't wear because she's alien. It really doesn't matter to her. But Donna, in particular, is the one. I became more fashion conscious about her because, for one thing, she deals in fashion as a photographer. So by doing it with her, I became more conscious of everyone, the fact that everyone has to dress. The only thing I hate about doing the men is I have no control over the coloring. I finally had had enough when I did a story where, just before Adrian Chase takes Dick and Kori to the studio, and where the hell does a D.A. get a green suit? I draw a suit, I tried to draw a finely cut suit, I based him originally on Daniel J. Travanti. And I'd never seen Daniel J. Travanti in a green suit yet, particularly that kind of green. You're talking here Polyester City. I

became very conscious of not only clothing that's fashionable, but in the case of Jillian, clothing that's trendy. Jillian was the first real teen-ager I was drawing. The other characters like Donna, I'm not going to say she's a teen-ager any more, and Dick isn't a teen-ager any more in my eye. Jillian was actually the first, beyond Gar, to actually really be a teen-ager doing things that teen-agers actually do. And she would be the type who listens to records, who goes to stores and gets electric fashion, because she will do everything that is trendy at this point. But when Marv said that we'd be bringing back Jillian, I was immediately determined that she was not going to be the same Jillian, that she'd be like Frances Kane. Frances Kane is comparatively someone who actually does look like a teen-ager today, and Jillian became the teen-ager of today, and boy, did she look different. No one recognized her. But like I say, I have been conscious of fashion, and a lot of it is thanks to my wife.

MacDONALD: *There's a very human element in your work, but comic books haven't been a very good place to do human stories. Do you think that the super-hero has stifled you at all in that regard?*

PEREZ: To some extent. In the case of the *Titans*, having been co-creator, and working with Marv who cared about the characters as much as I did, it wasn't as bad then, because the book was selling so well that we could break away from formula without a hassle. Unfortunately, on a lot of other characters, particularly characters that appeal to a very young audience, no one would okay a series of very personal Superman stories, probably, because *Superman* has lost its direct-sales audience anyway, so they probably would not allow you to get really as personal as you would like, because there's a lot of personal stuff we'd like to do. Dick and Kori being an example of that. They are really natural, and just don't fit in to the super-hero as people see it. They don't want the super-heroes to become too three-dimensional, that they are too human. I myself like a sense of formality to the characters. I like the idea of questioning what they're doing. One of the great issues, which I regret not being able to draw, because of my time, was issue #6, when the Teen Titans actually had to deal with, "Why the hell are we Teen Titans anyway?" All this work, all this aggravation. Heroes one day, bums the next. And I liked the idea that this is a fantasy element. Granted, it's a fantasy of the way I feel. If it's a fantasy, it's *my* fantasy. So my fantasies also have my questions. To me, the most realistic super-hero who ever existed is Iron Man, because if I were going to fight crime in New York City, I'd be in armor from head to toe. Little crazy things like that, just thinking about the characters more. I would love to sit down and think, and talk . . . you know, *My Dinner With Andre* in comics. It's a challenge. Obviously, you couldn't do it exactly like film, because the characters lack movement, but then I'd have to be really super-creative. Technically, it'd be just talking heads. You know, shoot through the armpits, shoot up their legs, you know, do something crazy. That's what I would love to do, if they ever brought back love comics. Super-heroes are fun, they give you some action, but they are rather confining, because there always seems to be an obligatory fight scene, or an obligatory point of exaggerated action. Because that doesn't always mean a fight or a confrontation. You wrote the article on the fights, the mandatory fight scene in comics [in *The Comics Journal* #87].

MacDONALD: *Yeah.*

PEREZ: And one thing I was happy with when I read it, was that at least Marv and I, we were aware of it when we were doing it, but we tried

Uninked early battle scene between the Man of Steel and the amazing Amazon.

to find stories that didn't always go into, as you rightfully reported, a very predictable fight, which ends up as the entire gist of what the story is about. No matter what they discuss, it's all going to lead to this fight. Everything is just filler for the fight. You know, the *Secret Wars* mentality.

MacDONALD: *Yeah, right.*

PEREZ: The one thing that was nice in the first issue of *Crisis* was that there was only one fight scene, really major one, in the entire story. That was kind of nice. I wasn't constantly drawing fight scenes. My least favorite issue of the *Teen Titans* was issue #37—

MacDONALD: *I think I know which one that was.*

PEREZ: That was the Outsiders. Not only because of the fact that I really thought there was no reason for the team-up really to occur, but I hated doing it. When I drew it, I drew it with really gritting teeth When the Titans meet the Outsiders, what happens? Well, at least I got away with the fact that Terra is the only one who actually fights them. Because I really did not want to have a Titans-Outsiders fight, mainly because, why is it that every time two super-hero groups meet they have to fight. Good God! They always have to fight. In the case of the *JLA-Avengers*, when that book was originally plotted, that's what everyone wanted. There was no way around it. That book was a fight book. As long as we went into it with the full knowledge that's what we were aiming to do, it made perfect sense that way.

MacDONALD: *It's obvious that you do enjoy drawing the quiet moments more than the buildings blowing up.*

PEREZ: Yeah.

MacDONALD: *This is the old argument that the comics medium doesn't have to be buildings blowing up*

PEREZ: Well, I don't feel that it should be. Unfortunately, sales figures show that It's like television, I guess. You condition an audience by giving them junk food, and you never even question the fact that they probably probably would have taken a gourmet meal, if given to them, because you're so used to, hey, junk food works, why change it? Comics are guilty. There are those who try to break out of the mold. Like the recent issue of *Swamp Thing*, with him sending his girlfriend into an orgasm by eating this chunk of his body. That's great! An entire issue, just showing how he could share his love with her. I couldn't believe it. That was the entire issue. Wow! That's a great thing. I saw the cover, I said, "What a strange quiet cover for *Swamp Thing*, but nice," but I thought it was just going to be part of the action, but that was the essence of the entire story. That's—Wooow! That's because Swamp Thing is not a super-hero, it shouldn't surprise me, but isn't it nice to see that they can do that. My God, an entire issue that was just an interlude. An interlude that didn't set the world on its ear, just showed two people in love. Wooow! A nice change of pace. Unfortunately, when companies become too big, and base their reputations a lot on what easily sells—and there's no crime in that—it's kind of nice when you see somebody else trying, even if it is on a lot smaller scale, to do something that's different. *Love and Rockets* and *Swamp Thing* are a nice change of pace. If *Love and Rockets* had the power of a big company behind it, the idea of that type of book, of personal stories without super-heroics. If a major company can do that, and stick to its guns on it. They make such irrational decisions sometimes, like, "Let's hire a female editor, because she'll know how to handle it." Just because she's a female, suddenly, she's an expert on these stories, as opposed to just finding people who are really interested. Like in the case of doing a love comic, as opposed to a wet fantasy, which is what most of them end up being. The man always ends up being a real shmuck, and he still gets the girl. Like what men did to Lois Lane for all these many years. My wife was a big Lois Lane fan. We've got like a big collection of it, and it's laughable, because they were written by men. I give credit to most of the writers now, because they know that they would be castrated royally if they tried writing things like that. But, I'd love to see a real good mystery, like the Sherlock Holmes *Teen Titans* thing

Humorous illustration done by Perez for an article on golf in **National Lampoon**.

FORE!
I'LL HAVE YOUR SEASON STARTING TIME REVOKED!
WELL, GOT A LAWYER ABOUT 150 YARDS TO YO RIGHT! USE NO NUMBER 3 BRICK!
BY GOD THAT FOOL IS PLAYING WINTER RULES!

wherein there is a definite mystery. Of course, I'm also talking about things that an artist, particularly, has to really work hard to make interesting, the visual form. In an industry where a lot of people can make more money by doing the thing that'll make the most money, I'm not any different. *Crisis on Infinite Earths* is my security blanket. They'll take the book that they can make money on. I'm sure most people don't have the faith that the book is going to be anything that they should commit that much time, because they're not going to get anything on the back end of it. It has never been proved that way, but I would love to do it. Again, I'm doing *Crisis on Infinite Earths* to have room for this type of nonsense. If I weren't on contract with DC, I'd love to be able to market it someplace, "Hey, if you want me to do something. . ." I don't know if you saw the story, it was in *Alien Worlds*. "Ride the Blue Bus."

MacDONALD: *No. I didn't.*

PEREZ: It was a story that I was asked by Bruce Jones if I would please do something for science fiction. It was the first time I've ever received an offer from someone who didn't take advantage of the fact that he was using George Perez. He gave me a story that had a rocket, no big-boobed women, no skin-tight costumes, it was a post-holocaust story about a little boy in the middle of a desolate area of an atomic swamp, a nuclear Detroit. He's the only member of the family who has not gone through the disease, namely radioactive poisoning. And, at the end, the Blue Bus finally stops in front of him, he gets in, he's the only passenger in that bus. Instead of windows, there are holographic images of what Earth used to look like. It was the first time he'd seen trees, the first time he'd seen waterfalls, and the Blue Bus driver saying what he's always been doing with this bus is trying to find those who have survived and who will be able to repopulate the world. And that was the whole lesson of the story. And in the end he's just being driven off on the Blue Bus, and he leaves his family behind. It was such a change of pace for me. I enjoyed that so immensely. I thank Bruce for just giving me a chance to do something different. He took into account that I could draw, without taking into account what I'd been drawing. It gave me a shot at doing something totally new. And I was so proud of that job. It was one of my first inking jobs that I did. I did it right before I did the *Teen Titans*, and I was just so proud of that. Unfortunately the only chances I get on stories like that are usually going to be in alternative companies.

Pencil study of a feline female from Perez's early sketchbooks.

MacDONALD: *There is that alternative now.*

PEREZ: I'm on contract for five years. When my contract is clear I can start doing outside work, but I'd like to. If I do a portfolio, it won't be super-heroes. Then again, it might not sell, either.

MacDONALD: *What can we do to make it sell?*

PEREZ: A lot of it's just the the person involved. If he's got a big enough name—which people tell me I do—if he takes the time on it; I think sometimes the energies are high. The *Titans* wedding issue was an example. We were both excited about it. There was just a marriage, but there was a lot that happened. In a lot of pages, people are just talking. But the enthusiasm, the fact that I did get to draw panel after panel of the same heads talking, showed. You have to take the time. Artists in comics have a lot of responsibility because they are, for good, for ill, what usually brings in

S'MATTER WITH YOU, BOY, YOU SICK? HERE COMES THE BLUE BUS!
LET IT COME. I'M EATIN' MY BREAKFAST.
LAWD A MIGHTY! LOOK HERE! IT'S STOPPED!
IT'S STOPPED RIGHT IN FRONT OF OUR PLACE! TOBY, YOU GET OUT THERE AND SEE WHAT THEY WANT!
I AIN'T PAYIN' NO MORE PROPERTY TAXES!

Rare science fiction by Perez in "Ride the Blue Bus," from **Alien Worlds** #7

the casual reader. Because pictures are the first thing you see, the cover is the first thing you see. And a lot of times, it just requires us to sit down and fall in love with our work again, without being narcissistic about it, and realizing that if we enjoy enjoy what we're doing, we hope that the readers will enjoy it too. I'm a fan first, an artist second

MacDONALD: *Did you read a lot of comics as a child?*

PEREZ: Oh, yeah. Comics was one of the first things I was reading. I was reading comics in kindergarten. And in fact, I didn't stop reading comics until I'd become a pro, mostly. If nothing else, because of lack of time. I read very few comics now. Look at the pictures a lot, because I want to see what everyone else is doing. But very, very few comics do I read. Most of the information I get about comics I get from other people, from the trade magazines, the *Journal*, the *Buyer's Guide* I learn what's going on from them. Sometimes they surprise me, because I find my name in there, and I don't know what the hell they're talking about.

MacDONALD: *What were your favorite comics as a kid?*

PEREZ: I think one of my very, very early favorites was *Legion of Super-Heroes*, which was the one book that everyone assumed I was going to be drawing when I went to DC. I didn't draw the book But the *Legion* was a big favorite of mine. A friend of mine in school and I used to buy the comic, and then talk about it for days. This is before I discovered Marvel. I was strictly DC until I read an issue of the *Fantastic Four*. I think it was the introduction of Diablo That turned me on to Marvel, and Roy Thomas once said it was one of the worst-selling issues of the early *Fantastic Fours*. There was something indicative in that, I guess. But, like, I always did seem to gravitate towards team books. I did love *Fantastic Four* and the *Avengers*. The *Avengers* is one of my favorites there. The *JLA* I enjoyed, not as much as the others, I guess even then I was not as enthused about the artwork as I was with the dynamic artwork over at Marvel I loved *Thor*; I'm so glad *Thor* got back on its feet. I really love *Thor*, almost all of Kirby's stuff. And *Spider-Man*, I was going in and out of. I think it took a while before I finally saw an issue and read it totally. But mostly, almost anything that Marvel was producing at the time. I was a big Marvel fan, plus I enjoyed some DCs. But didn't DC that much until they were going into the really creative stage of the *Secret Six*, which I'd love to bring back. The *Secret Six*, the *Inferior Five* which was really nutsy, and one book that was aimed for children that I never even read until I was an adult, I regret, was *Sugar and Spike*

MacDONALD: *Did you read,* Donald Duck*?*

PEREZ: No, I was never interested in Disney. To me, they were cartoons, and the comics never really caught me. I was not as familiar with who the artists were—they weren't credited at the time, who drew *Donald Duck*—but at that point, as a young kid, I was very stupid. As many young fans are.

MacDONALD: *[laughs].*

PEREZ: To this day! In which we have such a myopic view on what we like as far as artists are concerned, that we really don't treasure what he have. I *hated* Alex Toth. I really hated Alex Toth's work when I was young; I look at him as a master now, from totally different eyes. Other artists I didn't care for. I didn't care for Gene Colan, and he was doing fine work at the time There were so many artists I just didn't like who I look at now and say, "What the. . .?" It makes me at least able to tolerate when I hear fans who are spouting off the same stupid stuff that I spouted off, except that I didn't spout it off to the pros. I didn't know any pros at the time. Ron Frenz mentioned that a kid said, "I love your work, but I hate this guy Steve Ditko." Ron Frenz owes a lot to Steve Ditko, as does John Byrne. And I owe a lot to Jack Kirby I owe a lot to Curt Swan, and I constantly see him denigrated. Sometimes I have to sit back and think that I was once that stupid, too. The only thing I can hope is that they grow out of it. Because a lot of people, I've seen a lot of obnoxious fans Actually a lot of very nice and friendly fans, too, some who I

became friends with, and keep in contact with. I think the myopic point of view is worse for me now, only because they have a greater history of things to look back on, while, in my case, I couldn't say, Well, look, this guy's been doing work all these years." There weren't that many years in front of me, as far as I was concerned. But these people have all this access to some of this work, and they still can't see it. But then again, I was stupid too.

MacDONALD: *Well, why did you change?*

PEREZ: I changed only because, as I started learning how to draw, and started really drawing, I realized by either peripherally, by cursorily looking at other people's work, I was learning something. These people *knew* something. In the case of Toth, he knew how to make the most impact with a line. Something that I personally did not do in my own style, but I actually understood that he was an artist who chose that style, who chose to be simpler. As opposed to Barry Smith, who I idolized when I was young, who

Above "Electron"
Right: "The Outcasts" The character to the far left is Perez himself.

took certain things that he did, but then amplified it with incredible amounts of detail. As it turned out, his particular taste in art itself was reflected in his work, and he enjoyed a very gothic design, but that also explains why Barry Smith is so much slower than Alex Toth, I guess. As I learned how to draw, I realized how much work it was, and I started going with the attitude that every single person who has made it as a pro, in my opinion, at least deserves my respect to look at their work, to see what they are doing. If there's any thinking involved, I'll be able to tell. If there's a recognizable style that manages to adapt itself to whatever the story requires, then that man is definitely got a firm hold on his artistic ability. The only things I cannot tolerate are those who think they are grander than they actually are. That's usually more pronounced among younger artists. I was the same way, again. I wasn't the type that took criticism well, but at least I channeled it. So whenever I got criticized, I got angry, I got snooty. But then I would go and try to rectify it, sort out what I could learn from what that person had told me. He couldn't tell me at the time without my blowing my stack. I was stubborn. It always makes me a little nervous talking to young fans now. Young fans, old fans, some of them are my age. When they ask for advice, even if I think their stuff stinks, or I think they really have no potential in the business, if nothing else, I'm going to be wrong. I mean, I would have thought Barry Smith would never amount to anything after seeing his first work. And most people thought the same thing when they saw my first work. But the thing is, I have to try to at least criticize them and look in their eyes, and I realize that they have stopped listening. Because I know that feeling. I know the disappointment, you're now so angry at getting real criticism that you're no longer listening. And that's when I start fudging. That's when I decide I can no longer give them a valid criticism, I'll just make something up. But that becomes instinctive. That's when you really have to know who your audience is. I've sometimes given devastating critiques on somebody, picking up little things that they can improve on. Not telling them it stunk, just telling them things that they were doing wrong. But knowing that that person will go, having at least listened to what I said, hopefully, they'll work on it.

MacDONALD: *Yeah. You can't say, "You have absolutely no talent at all." You can just say, "You know, if you drew the arm so it connects to the shoulder, I think it would improve your work."*

PEREZ: Yeah, that type of thing, or, "You have work on proportions, you have to work on clothes and clothings." Remember, one of my favorite lines, "For every Superman, there's a Clark Kent." That's another big thing, I did too. I knew nothing about clothes and clothing when I went into comics, and it shows. I looked over at Marv, and it was a disaster, he didn't even wear regular clothing. I didn't know any anatomy, either, but don't tell me that at the time. Good God.

MacDONALD: *Whose work do you enjoy now?*

PEREZ: Oh, God! There are just so many. There are some people who inspire me to better work. Jose Garcia Lopez is one. Brian Bolland is another. I still get a great kick out of watching John Byrne's work. I'm glad he stopped inking himself, so he could concentrate on his work a little more. Who else? Howie Chaykin! I mean, his style and mine are totally alien, but I just love the vitality in his work. And the fact that

Recently officially accepted into the Titans, Jericho is one of the most enigmatic characters.

he's so great on that *American Flagg!* series, he just loves doing it. Bill Sienkiewicz, just because he's so gut feeling. Again, totally alien to my style. People I would go out of my way to pick up their work. The ones I've mentioned, I'm sure I'm forgetting. Gil Kane still excites me. I'm not fond of his inking, but I'm really fond of his dynamics. Almost everyone in the business I look at with some kind of enthusiasm. There are very few people I hate. There are some, I'm not going to mention them. That would be really obnoxious.

MacDONALD: *Yes, yes. Let's keep this sunny.*

PEREZ: Yes. But there are so many people, those in particular, who usually keep me on my toes. The type of people that I look at makes me want to do better work. A lot of my first issue of *Crisis-Earths*, I'm grateful to Jose Luis Garcia Lopez, when I saw the pencils of his first *Teen Titans* before I did the first issue of *Crisis Earths*, and it just inspired me to do better work. This year DC has got *Crisis-Earths*, they've got two *Titans* books. When I was told by Marv—I think this is unofficial—for the first time, DC actually has four books in the Top Ten. The *Who's Who*, *Crisis*, and the two *Titans* books. I said, "Wow!"

MacDONALD: *Just looking through Jose's first book, I'm not sure Romeo [Tanghal]'s the right inker for him.*

PEREZ: I've been told that. You're the second person who's told me that now. I have not seen Romeo's inking. I have only seen the pencils, which I fell in love with. I have reservations about Romeo inking Jose's work. As did Marv. But then again, Romeo's never inked Jose, we'll give him a fair shot. A lot of people have told me about maybe it's a little simple, like, a line with no real rendering applied. I'll have to check that out. At this point, Romeo's tenure, if nothing else, is going to be allow him to be staying on. There were a few things that Jose did wrong, too, so far as, the size of the characters. The last panel shows an incredibly large Gar Logan.

MacDONALD: *I think I noticed that too. I mean, holy cow—*

PEREZ: That's Gar?

Early-'70s drawing of the Titans that Perez wrote, pencilled, and inked before turning pro.

MacDONALD: *Yeah, right.*

PEREZ: It's the old adage: "my god, he drew him with two left feet!" "Yeah, but didn't he draw them well?"

MacDONALD: *Well, let's ask the final wrap-up question here. Where do you see yourself going in comics? A nice, pretentious question here.*

PEREZ: Well, I want to do more stuff that I can take my time on. I've said that before. I want to get in some writing. See if I'm any good at it, and if nothing else, to have a little more control. I want to ink my own work. And I basically just want to take my time, so that I can say that when a person asked me when I'm going to do my best work, that it is my next work. I don't think I've done my best, and I hope I never feel that way. But basically, I just want to take a little more control. I've been on the assembly line quite a bit up till now, so now I want to take some chances. I just don't want to throw out a lousy fill-in book. I want to do stories that are not necessarily super-heroes. I just want to experiment now. I've played it safe. I'll probably play it safe later. I'll probably get on a book guaranteed to sell enough to buy three houses in a year, because of the fact that I do need some money. I'm no fool. But I really do want to get to take some time to take the chances.

This interview was conducted by Heidi MacDonald, transcribed by Mark Thompson, and edited by Tom Heintjes.

THE EARLY DARNED GOOD ARTIST

Years back, the seeds of artistic superstardom were planted. Lou Mougin examines Perez's creative roots, and where they lead to.

Good artists can start out bad, or mediocre, and work their way up. With a *darned* good artist, he usually starts out pretty good.

George Perez is a darned good artist, and he started out pretty good.

He started out, specifically, around 1974 at Marvel Comics, during one of their expansionary periods, when they were putting out every kind of comic imaginable, in every kind of genre. Monsters were pretty popular around Marvel about that time, so they put him to work doing *Man-Wolf*, one of their werewolf strips. Kung Fu was pretty popular in the movies, too, so it wasn't long before he started drawing a strip in this here big black-and-white book they called *Deadly Hands of Kung Fu*. He did a couple of things here and there and everywhere else for them, too, and that's how he started out.

THE RAMPAGING EMBODIMENT OF LUNAR FURY LIMNS LITTLE RESEMBLANCE TO THE MAN IT HAS USURPED
IN DEMONIACAL WRATH IT VENTS BESTIAL EMOTIONS...
SKRASH!
The Man-Wolf strikes, a la Perez.

But it's hard to convince people you're pretty good when you're just starting out, and that may be why Dave Kraft says he felt pretty trepidatious when he heard his first Man-Wolf script, in this book called *Creatures on the Loose*, was going to be illustrated by this new artist. I mean, George Tuska had been drawing it and he was somebody you could depend on—but a *rookie?*

Still and all, after Perez had done that first issue of *Man-Wolf*, Dave Kraft took a look at it and said to himself, probably in words not unlike these, "That guy's a *Pretty Good Artist.*" And so (says Dave) he stumped the Marvel offices to make George the regular artist on the Man-Wolf strip, and got him instated. And everybody who saw the art agreed that they had a budding talent on their hands, except for *one* editor who absolutely hated his work and wanted to get him bounced.

It's not for me to perpetrate scandal at any point, you understand, but if you check the writer's credit for any issue of *The*

1
2

A wimpy remark, indeed.

New Teen Titans you might have a good idea of who that editor was.

About the same time Perez started drawing that strip in *Deadly Hands of Kung Fu*. It was called "Sons of the Tiger," only this wasn't a series about a pack of tiger's cubs. These Sons were three youthful chaps who wore tiger amulets that gave them mystical powers and made them crackerjack kung fu artists.

When "Sons of the Tiger" started out, it was just your usual backup strip, even though it did have some very good Dick Giordano art on the first couple of chapters But he and Gerry Conway, the writer, both gave up on it, and it only showed up in half of the first six issues of *Deadly Hands* It looked as if Marvel was about to give up on it, too. After all, Shang-Chi was the lead feature, and he could out-kung-fu the lot of 'em with his hands tied behind his back and his eyes blindfolded. He was darned good.

That was before George Perez, and before Bill Mantlo

But we *must* get back to Man-Wolf—first things first.

Man-Wolf was a spinoff from *Spider-Man* The hero was John Jameson, son of the publisher we all know and love, J. Jonah, and his famous daddy was a regular Man-Wolf cast member That alone should have guaranteed it some readership, but it didn't work out that way For one thing, the writing was never spectacular enough. For another, there was no cross-over policy with his parent title, not so much as a mention in *Spider-Man* that Jonah was playing footsie with his furry offspring in *Creatures on the Loose*. The most obvious gimmick, a battle with Spider-Man in *CotL*, was never tried. Authors Moench, Isabella, and Kraft obviously didn't see the feature that way; super-heroes weren't *supposed* to crossover into monster books. But not enough readers saw Man-Wolf *any* way enough to keep him going.

Perez and Man-Wolf's new writer, Kraft, both entered the ring with *CotL* #33, Jan. 1975. The cover was a dynamite Gil Kane/Klaus Janson shot of Man-Wolf crouched over his fallen fiancee, and J Jonah brandishing a rifle at him. Kane did every Man-Wolf cover before and after this, too, except the next one which was Perez's only cover. But, of course, the interiors were *all* Perez's show

Man-Wolf battles the Hate-Monger in **Creatures on the Loose** #35.

And Perez, sure enough, put on the best show he could provide. He was still in his Pretty Good stage, but that's no sin to be held against him. Many marvel artists were still learning their chops around this time—Jim Starlin, Craig Russell, and Al Milgrom come to mind—and his was neither as bad as the worst of them nor as good as the best. But there *was* talent there, and some promise that only a few of his colleagues ever realized. If Perez hadn't realized it, of course, you wouldn't be reading this book about him.

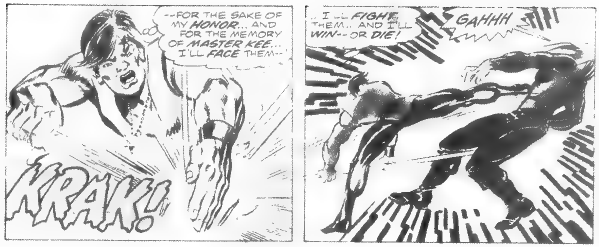
A single-panel page on #33 didn't come off; a double-pager in a typical Mad Scientist Lair fared better in *COTL* #34. Some of the faces and body proportions weren't altogether right, but he learned as he went on. By #35, Perez was putting down some pretty exciting action shots. There was a motorcycle leap with the Man-Wolf on a charging hog that took three pages to leap-crash-flameout. The Hate-Monger, or a reasonable facsimile thereof, was back for a two-shot appearance and Perez got a shot at drawing Nick Fury and SHIELD for a few pages. Finally, *Man-Wolf* turned into all-out space opera for the last two issues; John Jameson had gained his affliction on the moon, and there he went to search out a cure. Almost every issue included a double-page centerspread, and on these Perez really had a chance to lavish on the detail. You could gauge by the improving art just what issue you had picked up even if you didn't know the issue number. By the final issue, #37—well, Perez was pretty darned good.

Naturally, Perez drew three more issues of Man-Wolf for *Marvel Premiere*, tying up the whole plotline, but that was years later, when he was *darned* good and had been for quite a while. So it's no fair to include them in this discussion.

And now you can stop fidgeting, as we're about to get back to *Sons of the Tiger*.

Perez came on with issue 6 of *Deadly Hands* for the "Sons" tale. It was not the greatest of stories. Denny O'Neil put his "Jim Dennis" nom de plume on the credits after he wrote it. That *other* credit, though, that one for the art—that

Deft panel-to-panel continuity from **Creatures on the Loose** #33.



Perez's debut on the Sons of the Tiger strip in **Deadly Hands of Kung-Fu** #6

was Perez

It wasn't the prettiest Perez you'd see, not by a long shot Frank Springer did the inking, and Perez doesn't look too good inked by Frank Springer But you could see some promise there, in the large panels with multi-action shots, the punches with the masses of broken, jagged energy lines flowing away from impact, the inlaid borders of marble framing a page, and, more than anything, that headlong, driving violence when the fighting started. There were 15 pages in the story and only five of them weren't devoted to fight scenes. It wasn't *darned* good. . .

But it was still pretty good

Things must have started happening after that issue, because Perez got a much better inker in Bob McLeod. And the writer was a guy who would turn the strip into something really worth waiting for each month—Bill Mantlo. Bill was new and so was George—well, there really weren't too many people in that Second Generation Bullpen that had time to get *old*, except Roy Thomas and a couple of others—and they seemed to get it together, as if there was a lot they had to tell that they'd stored up before and now was the time to tell it.

In issue 7, that's what they started to do. The good guys, trapped inside a super-scientific lair worthy of AIM at its height of technocracy, faced and walloped their darkest fears in illusion form, kicked their way out through concrete walls and pummeled the daylights out of three warrior robots. (Still, when they invoked their tiger-totem, it *did* tend to look like something out of an Exxon commercial.)

It was a good break from the past, and it didn't stop with the encounter described above. Within the story, we learned a bit more about Tiger's Son Bob (who saw himself overwhelmed by his own 10-foot ego), Abe (who faced down the same white biker punks who almost killed him when he was 10) and Lin (who feared disapproval from his mentor, Master Kee). The Tiger's Sons began to become a viable, readable strip.

Perez and Mantlo kept the quality coming for the remainder of their "Tiger" collaboration. The inkers varied all over the range from Mike Esposito to Dan Adkins to Jack Abel to Steve Gan, while Perez found his own range of expression in the pencils. His style had the advantage of always producing a page you could comprehend. You could *understand* a George Perez page, even though Rudy Nebres's multi-figure treatment of Shang-Chi or Iron Fist in the front of the book might give you eyestrain trying to catch the action. Yet it was never too conventional. Slowly but surely—as in *Man-Wolf*—he improved.

The Sons of the Tiger wrapped up the Silent Ones plotline by issue 11, freeing Mantlo and Perez to try a few more *outre* things with the strip. Lotus Shinchuko, a Tiger's Daughter of sorts, was added with issue 8. A bald, cigar-smoking black detective named Blackbyrd made the scene with #12 (this was the age of blaxploitation films as well as kung-fu kickoffs) and proved durable enough to survive the entire series, and later do guest-shots in *Spider-Man*. The Sons went through three solo adventures, and then came the acclaimed Attica-derived story, "The Rites of Every Citizen."

"Rites," a two-parter, would never had gotten near a Code-approved comic. The Tiger quartet were assigned to investigate conditions inside a major prison, and they ended up on the side of the cons during a riot. Mantlo and Perez didn't spare us much, either. Beatings, shooting, stabbings, and other assorted acts of mayhem were depicted face-on, and Lotus even picked up a machine gun and shot a villainous guard to death with it. Abe Brown's line, "You oily drunken *bastard*!" wouldn't have endeared him to Leonard Darvin's coterie, either. In the end, there was victory—of a sort. The bad-guy administrators of the prison ended up with cold steel in their guts, but so did a batch of prisoners. Of all the "Tiger's Sons" stories, "Rites" (*DHKF* #5, 16-17) stands out as the one readers remember above the rest

But after a one-issue lull in which Pat Broderick spelled Perez, the "Sons" strip changed direction again. Evidently someone upstairs decided one costumed hero might prove more popular than three kung-fu fighters doing riffs from *Billy Jack*. So they tried a new tack, and what they had when they got through with the writing and the drawing was "An Ending," in *DHKF* #19

Still, as Mantlo pointed out in the

rse of the story, it was more of a beginning.

Start out with two people ambling down the sidewalks of New York's Lower East Side, these two people being well, let's not be coy about it Perez and Mantlo. (This is, I presume, the Marvel Universe George Perez, who also showed up in *Fantastic Four* #176, as opposed to the DC Universe George Perez, who made a guest-shot in *New Teen Titans* #20.) Mantlo, in sweaters and a lumberjack shirt, is raving about the realism this jaunt will allow him to inject into his stories. Perez, for his part, rattles off a mental list of all the writers he worked with at the time: "Englehart. Moench. Mantlo. Thomas. Isabella. *All nuts!*"

Just as Perez is about to beg off so he can go home and finish *The Inhumans* (and he had much cause to, since he was drawing *The Avengers*, the *Fantastic Four and The Inhumans*, in addition to the Tiger's Sons"), they get bumped by Bon Bob Diamond bypassing them. In his wake come Lotus, Lin, and Abe, who are about to have a powwow. "Maybe you're right!" allows Perez, hands on hips. "Yvie *says* that I'm working too *hard*!"

If he was, most of that hard work was reflected in this episode. Intergroup conflicts in the Sons came to a head in this issue, and it was handled more grittily than it would have been in the four-color books. Abe and Lotus flatly walked out, and Bob (the white guy) cussed out the normally good-natured Lin Sun, laying out insults like "You stinking yellow, son of a—", "Chinaman," and "slant-eyes", all over Lin's burgeoning romance with Lotus. It erupted one page after the final insult, with double-page spread full of impact, Lin's figure stretched out across both pages, spanning three large slats of Zip-A-Tone, and ended where his foot connected with Bob's chin, framed by a sunburst in a black circle. Even Shang-Chi must have licked his lips in envy.

It didn't stop there. Perez and Mantlo guided the twosome through a grim, pitiless one-on-one battle, as the two Tigers proceeded to thoroughly beat the crap out of one another. Blood flowed across faces that would never have seen print in a 20-cent comic. They kicked, they kneed, they kidney-punched, they chopped, and it took seven pages before it was all done—the most brutal fight ever depicted in *Deadly Hands*. Then, suddenly, it was over. Lin refused to hit his opponent again, and Bob refused to hate him. They dropped their Tiger's amulets out a window, where Abe had already dropped his, and, leaning on each other, walked out into the night.

Came the dawn, and a new character—one Hector Ayala, wearing a T-shirt with PUERTO RICO ME ENCANTA emblazoned across it. He passed by the alley where the amulets were tossed, thought they looked pretty cool, and put them on. Then, with a blinding flash of light borrowed from Thor or Captain Marvel, and a whisper of "¡Carajo! ¡Este es mas incredible!", Hector Ayala was transformed into the White Tiger, comics' first Hispanic super-hero.

George wasn't much longer for the feature, but he *did* get things off to a realistic and action-packed start. The Tiger had enough charisma to carry him off as the new leading man of the strip—still called "Sons of the Tiger"—and, with Perez's wife Yvie helping out on the Spanish dialogue, the hero bounded full-throttle into a battle against a street gang and an encounter with The Prowler, an old Spider-Man villain. Then George left, shucking some of his mushrooming workload, and Keith Giffen took over, reflecting Perez's influence in his first few episodes. Perez came back for #30, and then left it to Joe Staton.

We might also mention the *Unknown Worlds of Science Fiction* story drawn by Perez and written by Tony Isabella. "War Toy" concerned a sentient robot soldier who only wanted to serve the good old U.S.A. He saved the world from an alien invasion almost single-handedly, and ended up killing himself in a V.A. hospital just before the aliens returned. "War Toy" was one of *Unknown Worlds'* best original stories in its short run, and has been reprinted in an issue of *Bizarre Adventures*. Isabella's script is very good, but without Perez's artwork, its impact would have been much lessened. Considering *UWoSF's* high quality and relatively low dealer price, the curious should investigate for themselves.

So that brings us up to 1977. The Tigers' Sons had passed on into other hands, and they weren't long for this world anyway. Man-Wolf had met a silver bullet of cancellation in some dark alley two years before. But that didn't matter much to Perez, who had gone on to bigger and better things: a short run of *Inhumans*, a long run of *Avengers*, and a stint on *Fantastic Four* even Stan Lee admired. That was *years* before the comic about them teenaged super-heroes, friends.

By that time, George Perez had made it.

By that time—well, he was a Darned Good Artist.

Lou Mougin is a frequent contributor to **Amazing Heroes,** and recently completed his "Golden Age Reprint Directory" for **AH**.

Target practice from **Unknown Worlds of Science Fiction** #2.

THE KEEN TEENS

From anonymity to fandom's spotlight, the Teen Titans have captured the imaginations of fans everywhere, primarily due to George Perez and Marv Wolfman. Mark Waid and R.A. Jones examine the reasons behind the teen's popularity.

In the Beginning was the Word.

And, in 1980, the word was—amusing. Len Wein and Marv Wolfman, fresh from their long stints at Marvel, were planning to resurrect a book with dubious marketing potential and a checkered past. The story went something like this...

Once upon a time, in the 1960s, DC Comics published a magazine about the adventures of the assorted teenaged sidekicks milling around the DC Universe—teenagers such as Robin, Kid Flash, Aqualad, Wonder Girl ,and Speedy. The book was called *Teen Titans*, sold respectably well, particularly during the years of the Batman TV show craze, and was quite charming in its day.

Unfortunately, when a fad dies, it dies hard. Not just DC's Batman-related titles, but comic books across the board, were forced to take new directions. In the Titans' case, this meant a new, more serious bent, away from the feature's original light-hearted approach, in an effort to try to recapture some of their fleeing audience. After several changes in storyline and approach, however, the book was cancelled Brought back in 1976 by a group of creators who tried to instill the more easygoing feeling of those first issues, the book still sold badly, and was once again dropped.

Nevertheless, Wein (as editor) and Wolfman (as writer) felt rather confident that this third time would be a charm. Maybe that was because they had thrown out some of the more cutesy, contrived characters. Maybe it was because they had ideas in mind for stronger additions to the team and grander, more timely storylines.

Or maybe it was because they had found an ace in the hole. To handle the pencilling chores, they chose a young artist who was a relative newcomer to the halls of DC. That man, of course, was George Perez. He was a natural for the post, destined to illustrate the adventures of the New Teen Titans for the next four years in well over 50 books.

In those four years, Perez was to help the Titans grow and mature as characters. In return, the Titans would help Perez mature as an artist, with his tenure on the book spent refining, and redefining, his own skills in every way possible.

Perez had recently left the employ of Marvel Comics with his reputation somewhat tarnished. The flashes of genius he had displayed had failed to blossom fully, seeming in danger of withering on the vine. Rumors of his artistic death, however, were greatly exaggerated. Everything comes in its own time

The gathering of the Titans from issue #1. Note how Kory's hair has evolved over time.

YOU WERE NOT ASSEMBLED SIMPLY FOR THIS MISSION, MY FRIENDS.
INDEED, EVEN NOW THE MENACE IS GROWING... ONE WHICH ONLY YOUR POWERS CAN HOPE TO OVERCOME!

THE JUSTICE LEAGUE of AMERICA VS.
50c
ALL NEW!
NO. 4
FEB.
THE NEW TEEN
TITANS
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
NEED WE SAY MORE?

Perez leaves no doubt that Trigon lords over all, in issue #6.

—and for Perez the time was at hand.

Despite his failings, Perez had already established himself as an action artist, capable of conveying tremendous power in his graphics. Along with that power, he also brought an artistic quality that had been missing from the Teen Titans for too long—a sense of realism. Not the realism of photography, certainly, but the amplified realism of comic art which makes you believe that this is the way a man would look if he really *could* lift an Oldsmobile. Not since Neal Adams's brief stint many years before had the book possessed this quality.

It gave the Titans an advantage from the start, when readers could more readily identify with the teens by seeing their world as an extention of our own. Of course, we've just made that kind of approach sound rather boring and pedestrian—which it can be. Fortunately, Perez was able to enhance reality with a growing cinematic style and understanding of camera angles that he was able to explore further from issue to issue over the next four years.

The first dozen issues of *The New Teen Titans* represent what one might call Perez's initial growth period, which took the Titans from the streets of New York to the temples of Paradise Island. The storytelling in the first few issues is certainly more than competent—the action is fast-paced, exciting and flows well—but various shortcomings are evident.

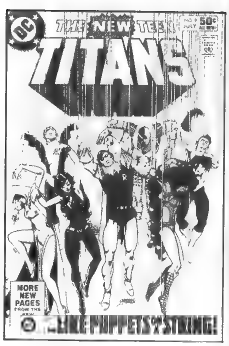
The players are, at times, awkwardly constructed—male and female figures alike tend to be a bit short and stocky. Moreover, Perez's reputation for detailed artwork worked against him at first, as backgrounds and foregrounds vied against one another for emphasis, particularly in fight scenes. For example, most of the real action of issue #1 takes place on board a spaceship—but the intricate high-tech background machinery present in almost every panel, coupled with a constant medium length shot, lend the book an overall lack of focus and scope, from panel to panel and page to page. Nevertheless, inner-panel composition and fluid, unstilted movement of form were definite strengths.

In these first issues, Perez learned his way around two specific camera angles that he uses effectively to this day. The first is the famed Perez "worm's-eye view" of a character; a shot used both in film and in comics to give the subject an air of importance and power, as in issue #6, pages 2 and 3, where Perez leaves no doubt that Trigon lords over all, including his daughter Raven.

The other angle is the opposite number, so to speak—the view from above—used, for instance, in issue #3, page 24, where Starfire comes to the aid of her fallen teammates; or issue #7, page 2, where the team is simply walking through a park.

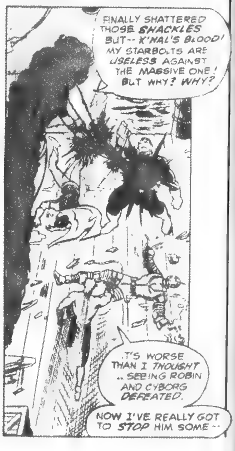
In both places, and countless dozens besides, as much visual information and intensity of action is presented in one-eighth of a page as would take four times the room with many artists. An essential "trick" in a group book, Perez collapses action horizontally while conveying it fully—and, incidentally, more often than not allows himself to work all the Titans into a single shot without a feeling of overcrowding.

The cover to issue #9—showing the Titans dangling like puppets from strings against a plain blue background—is the first strikingly



simple cover to appear on the book, and an accurate indicator of another subtle shift of style within. Here, Perez becomes "looser," eliminating some of the clutter and varying his angles to include more long shots and close-ups. We are treated to

A bird's-eye view of Starfire to the rescue, in issue #3.


FINALLY SHATTERED THOSE SHACKLES BUT-- K'NAL'S BLOOD! MY STARBOLTS ARE USELESS AGAINST THE MASSIVE ONE! BUT WHY? WHY?
T'S WORSE THAN I THOUGHT .. SEEING ROBIN AND CYBORG DEFEATED!
NOW I'VE REALLY GOT TO STOP HIM SOME--

more "white space" in panels, which accentuate the foreground figure, most notably in the lower half of page 23—still a dynamic battle scene, but with no backgrounds to distract attention. Also noteworthy in issue #9 is a new attention to panel layout. Here, in a story entitled "Like Puppets from a String," Perez uses an unusual number of high, vertical panels, which help to underline the theme of the action.

Issues #11 and 12 take the Titans to Paradise Island, home of Wonder Girl and the Amazons. By now, Perez has gotten a better handle on focus, and where as a year ago Athenian temples in the distance would have been vying for the eye's attention, now the architecture serves its proper purpose—to enhance the picture rather than precluding it. Perez needs bow to no comics artist in designing finely textured buildings, as in the double-page spread, pages 9 and 10, of issue #12. The stonecraft gives context to the scene, not rivalry. The illustration also stunningly conveys the sheer power Perez's art has carried almost from the beginning of his career.

Characters were beginning to gel in terms of their physical appearance by now, too. Back in the text page of *Teen Titans* #2, Marv Wolfman made mention that, as soon as Perez had been assigned the book, he did a number of character sketches to familiarize himself with these heroes. Among the sketches was a series of head shots, used on the splash page of that issue as a sort of "roll call." They were good, but the Titans reader of today looking back will easily see the problem with them; one readily admitted by Perez himself: there are really only two faces—a "boy" face and a "girl" face. Consequently, when they were used again on the cover of issue #8, they looked a little crude.

By then, Perez had begun to refine their individual looks. Changeling, for example, who is three years younger than his teammates and yet looked at least as old as any of them in the first few issues, had developed a smaller, more youthful face and was no longer as tall as all the others. Raven's face, now longer and

HER WISH HAS CAPE UP IN CRUEL DAYMARE
THIS ALIEN PRINCESS COMES FROM A WARRIOR RACE AND THIS BATTLE IS SOMETHING SHE DEEPLY BELIEVES IN
THE OTHERS LASH OUT WITH EQUAL FEROCITY. THEY HAVE SHED THEMSELVES TO WONDER GIRL LIKE SKIN. THESE TOYS THESE WEAPONS PUPPETS ARE ALL A BLASPHEMY
SO THEY ATTACK WITH ALL THEIR INCREDIBLE POWER
OR EVEN A POWER THAT DEFIES ALL REASONABLE EXPLANATION

Perez knew that backgrounds would distract from the battle—so he didn't use any. From issue #9

leaner, was more distinct from those of Wonder Girl or Starfire. For the first time in 25 years, Robin and Kid Flash did not share an identical countenance.

With this new command over faces, Perez felt safe in making another breakthrough that shows up in issue #11; using faces alone to tell parts of the story. Witness Wonder Girl's sequence on page 10; a series of four panels zooming in on her face as she breaks down and succumbs to her emotions. It is a device Perez would use again, with Starfire in issue #16, and Cyborg in #21, to cite two examples.

Moreover, he was using the faces to reflect emotion far more strongly than ever before. In issue #17, Kid Flash's girlfriend Frances Kane is "possessed," and Perez uses a great number of close-ups on her face during her trials to share those emotions with the reader. When Frances

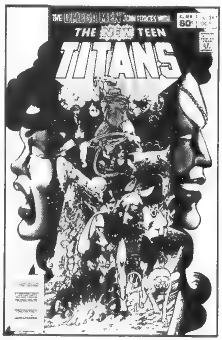
In issue #11, Perez exclusively used Wonder Girl's face to tell the story.

BUT MADNESS IS EVERYWHERE, AND IT EXISTS IN ALL FORMS...
AND, AS I BROUGHT YOU HERE THIS WORLD AND WISH TO SAVE THE WORLD FROM YOU--
YOU ARE THE CAUSE OF THIS, FRANCIS
I CAN TAKE YOU OUT AGAIN!
SHE'S STOPPED ROBIN
LEAVE ME BE, DON'T YOU SEE WHAT SHE IS DOING?
IF THIS CITY DIES, IT IS BECAUSE YOU WOULDN'T LET ME KILL HER.
MAKE WAY! S-SOMEONE -- STOP HER!
HOLD ON, GUYS. SOMETHING BIG IS HAPPENING
SKRAKK
KKKKK

The panels themselves contort with the psychic pain that the character is feeling. From issue #17.

is scared, she's terrified—and when she sweats, she sweats torrents. Examine pages 8, 13, and 16—they fairly shriek with psychic pain.

Something else that Perez discovered at about this time was how to create mood and atmosphere in a book full of characters almost all clad in either red or yellow. He starts in issue #17 by giving us several shots lit only by candlelight, forcing a great deal of shadow over faces and figures. It works well, and is only a warm-up for issues #21-22, introducing the



diabolical cult leader, Brother Blood. Perez clothes him and his multitude of followers in black and red, and pours an inky, eerie mood onto nearly every page.

With issue #23, Perez began to receive credit as the book's co-plotter, which seemed to add fuel to the fire that was already burning brightly. After a two-part adventure within the confines of Brother Blood's church, the Titans move into outer space, and Perez moves with them; giving his artwork a wider scope and allowing his pencils to become looser and freer than ever before. There is a greater air of artistic experimentation, starting with the design of #24's cover—the Titans and the Omega Men framed by profiles of Starfire and her villainous sister.

But it is not until two months later, with *Annual* #1, that Perez really begins to break loose and see how far he can stretch the boundaries without breaking them. The cover to the annual is a shot of the Titans battling the warriors of the Citadel—but what a shot! The foremost figures (Starfire, Robin and Blackfire) are rendered in straight, bold pen and ink—but the other figures, as they stretch into the background, are outlined in progressively grayer outline. Coupled with the streaked, gray magic marker background, it gives the look of a painted cover, but with the control of pen. It also looks remarkably three-dimensional.

The experiment in grays apparently worked well enough to serve as a springboard to the very next cover, where a somber, almost molded-color background—from which the Titans look on—gives way to a shadowy, rain-slicked street where heavy blacks and stark headlights play up the danger of a band of young runaways. From this point on, there is a more vital feel to the entire book, as Perez uses both the growing technological advancements in comics printing and his own fertile imagination to cut loose. Page 8 gives title to the story, "Runaways," stencilled in half-page tall letters out of a white foreground through which we can see the skyline of Manhattan towering over the silhouettes of running children, who are alone and isolated.

In issue #27, color holds abound,

Terra, the first new Titan, debuted in issue #28.

YOU'RE NOT GOING TO GIVE ME THE CHANCE TO PLAY HERO?
TERRA, TERRA, TERRA-- THIS IS WHAT I LOVE DOING SECOND MOST IN THE WORLD
C'MON, WE'LL TEAM UP AND SAVE YOUR PARENTS.
I SAID-- NO! GO AWAY!

Perez using them as much as possible, just to see what can be done with them. They make up the reflections in the mirrored sunglasses of a pusher; the blood that spills out of the title of the story; streetlamps, the night sky, the rectangular background behind Speedy on page 11; and give a new effect to the often seen teleportation entrance of Raven.

Wolfman and Perez bring in the first new Titan in issue #28—Terra, who has total control over earth, stone, trees, etc. It would be hard to imagine a comics character more tailor-made for an artist. Page 14 of that issue sees Perez also experimenting with a series of panels that starts off high on Raven as she begins meditation and drops towards the floor, thus gradually raising her on the page as she reaches high and higher in her trance state.

It was through the machinations of Raven that this newest incarnation of the Teen Titans had banded together, and it was through her

both in terms of story and art—that the book would achieve some of its greatest emotional impact. A hint of this occurs in issue #31, in a four-page sequence in which Raven is plunged into her own private hell.

Aided enormously by the red and yellow tones applied by colorist Adrienne Roy, it is a stunning representation of a woman who is both figuratively and literally stripped naked. Raven is forced to face the evil growing within her; the legacy of her demonic father Trigon. It is quite possible that no super-hero title had ever before carried a scene of such consummate horrors. Within that genre, it has never been surpassed—save by Perez himself.

Perez's experimentation begins branching out to the covers of the books as well. Issue #30 has Terra forming the cover layout, using her powers not only to form a framing arch upon which the other Titans are perched, but the actual logo as well! The cover of issue #33 shows the Titans looking down at the corpse of Trident lies, replete with ripples and diffused light. Even that of Issue #34 is a bit outre—presenting a stock portrait of the group, through which the Terminator leaps, guns blazing.

MY HAND!
AND NOW, CHILD, WHAT IS THAT TO WHICH YOU CLING?
NO!
YOU'RE DEATH.
YOU'RE EVIL!
I'D RATHER BE BEFORE LETTING YOU CURE ME!
YOU WILL LIVE
YES! I'LL TAKE MY HAND!

Kid Flash struggles in his own mind in Raven's private hell, from issue #31.

Annual #2 is something of an artistic throwback because of the inappropriately heavy inks of Pablo Marcos, who had applied a much finer line when he and Perez collaborated on the *Avengers* several years earlier at Marvel. Nevertheless, Perez's strong sense of layout is evident, and there is an interesting experiment in giving page 39 a certain claustrophobic feeling on the part of mobster Anthony Scarapelli, as he is being hunted in his own house by the Vigilante, whose face appears as a dim overlay across the page.

Wolfman and Perez play with another milieu in issue #38, as Dick Grayson searches for the parents of Wonder Girl. From the cover, rough and dark to give the feel of a '30s pulp novel, to the opening credits which appear, quietly typeset, over the first two pages of near-black panels, this issue is an artistic tour-de-force in which Perez brings every element that this article has together.

This touching tale established once and for all that Perez was now much more than just an action artist. Indeed, there is no "action" per se in the entire story; yet it is one of the most memorable in the history of the series, depending on mood and heightened by Perez's adept use of shadows. There is as much power in the single panel depicting Donna (Wonder Girl) Troy clinging to her adoptive mother as in a dozen pages of a standard comic-book battle.

Perez's ability to show kinetic action was not dimmed, however, as witnessed by the double-page spread he renders in the following issue (#39). Using his established strengths as a foundation, Perez begins to explore new artistic avenues. This issue shows extensive use of color holds, as well as black-

There's more power contained in this one panel than in a dozen battle scenes
Issue #38

General reaction to the announcement of Dick Grayson s retirement in ssue #39. Note how Perez has created an ind vidual look for each character

and-white screens to distinguish the scenes we readers are seeing through the contact lens camera of Terra.

On page 19 of that issue, Perez presents a sequence of face shots as the various Titans react to the news that Dick Grayson is forsaking his identity as Robin. Compare the faces to those in issue #7 and it will be quite evident how far the man has come in creating an individual look for each Titan. Also noteworthy on that page is a panel in which Robin stares out through a window. Reflected back is not the image of himself however, but rather that of the Batman—thus visually reinforcing both Robin's mood and his dialogue.

Beginning with issue #50, Perez was elevated to the position of being co-editor of the book, along with Wolfman—a rare honor, and indicative of just how great a creative role he played in the title's development. This issue carried on Perez's tradition of delivering outstanding cover illustrations. The mysterious Brother Blood is back, and he stands cloaked in shadows, bathing in a pool of molten blood. The Titans are also present on the cover, but one must look closely to discern them, for their bodies are colored in the same tones as the jagged stalactites to which they are bound.

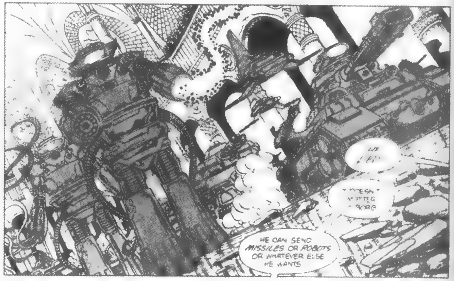
A similar scene is even more dramatically rendered inside. Perez has now honed his cinematic approach to art to keen excellence. Where once he largely relied on pans and zooms to achieve a celluloid effect, he now employs fast cuts, changing the angle and depths of the shot, building the tension of the scene to almost Hitchcockian heights as Brother Blood rises from the bubbling pool.

As becomes evident with the next issue (#41), Perez begins to use more and more vertical panels, rather than the horizontal ones of earlier issues. This serves to not only elongate the illustrations, but to compress them, so that one follows the other with (again) almost celluloid rapidity.

He has not, of course, abandoned his effective use of the horizontal panel. An excellent example of its use can be found on page 12. Panel 3 is not only shown from his patented worm's eye view, but also at a slightly tilted "camera" angle—juxtaposing deadly high tech robots against the ethereal, vaulted ceiling of a religious edifice. The angle makes the mechanoids appear even more menacing.

Still, Perez has developed a fascination with vertical expression. The upper one-third, conveying tensely packed emotionalism. With increasing frequency, Perez begins to lead off the page with a vertical panel which runs the entire length

Perez uses a slightly tilted worm's-eye view for maximum effectiveness in this scene from issue #41.



of that page—in a method similar to, but not imitative of, Frank Miller.

Issue #42 saw the beginning of the long-awaited four-part "Judas Contract" storyline, which would resolve plot elements that had been slowly developing for months. The first installment is titled "The Eyes of Tara Markov." Perez uses that title as the motif which runs through each of the four issues, with close-ups of the various characters' eyes conveying mood, characterization, and telling the story.

The first chapter opens with a deceptively passive full-page illustration. It is a lovely cheesecake shot of Starfire posing in a bathing suit. A long roll of movie film snakes around her, reflecting brilliant beams of light. She is standing in a lunar landscape set, with a backdrop of outer space. It is a charming, tranquil scene, lulling you into a false sense of security. Compare it to the other full-page illustration in this issue—that of a sweating, straining Cyborg attempting to lift a five-ton weight.

Passivity and Power. Perez has learned to master both.

Page 15, panel 1 makes use once again of the framing device which he had used with both frequency and effectiveness during his time with Marvel, but which now appears less and less often in his work. In the background of the panel are close-ups of Starfire and Wonder Girl. Laid over them are three panels done as black-and-white screens (Terra's "eyes") showing the action as the two engage in mock combat.

The next sequence pits Changeling against Terra, and serves to foreshadow what is to come three issues down the road. Terra loses control, goes wild, and nearly kills Changeling. It is an artistically dynamic scene, but again merely a taste of what will be.

The most effective sequence in this first chapter appears on page 21, where Perez fully displays his ability to compress and heighten tension, milking the eye motif for every last drop of drama. The bottom two-thirds of the page is composed of a series of six horizontal panels which do not quite reach the borders of the page. In order, they show: a close-up; a grim-faced Raven as seen through

INCREDIBLE! I'VE NEVER BEEN ABLE TO GET THE DRAGON TO ATTACK ANYONE!
I'VE BEEN TRAINING HER FOR MONTHS!
I'M IN CONTROL!
I'M IN CONTROL!
I'M IN CONTROL

hand of Dick Giordano. It is possible Perez was providing looser layouts, to give himself more time to work on the forthcoming annual which would conclude the Terra/Terminator storyline. Regardless, issue #44 is noteworthy not for the art but for the fact that it introduced Dick Grayson's new costumed identity of Nightwing, as well as ushering in the young man who would soon join the Titans' ranks—the silent mutant known as Jericho.

In *Annual* #3, Perez uses nearly his entire repertoire of artistic "tricks." The opening page displays his newfound fascination with vertical panels which run from top to bottom. From these narrow perspectives, he moves to a sweeping double-page spread displaying the captive Titans bound to the massive machine called the Enervator.

For sheer strength, page 25 brings it all together, in a full-page illustration of the Titans bursting free of their bonds. The border panel is drawn smaller than normal, thus not only forming a framing device but also heightening the dynamism of the scene and giving it a three-dimensional quality as both heroes and debris fly outward beyond its confines. Particularly eye-catching is the figure of Starfire, who appears as righteous rage personified.

Lost amidst her own hatred. From **Annual** #3.

YOU WON'T LIVE, DICKIE-- NONE OF YOU WILL.
I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR THIS MOMENT-- WAITING TO USE MY POWERS--
NOW NOTHING IS GOING TO STOP ME! NOTHING!

Compare this scene to that in issue #41 (page 4, panel 7). They are nearly identical in terms of the action involved, but the example from the Annual is more intense, and therefore more effective.

As foreshadowed earlier, Terra goes completely berserk in this story, portrayed with artistic fury by Perez. The climax is reached on page 37, presented again in long vertical panels. Terra is completely lost in her insane hatred. The very earth reflects that insanity as it explodes around her, until she is at last buried beneath it.

On page 39, Changeling at last recovers Terra's body from the rubble, in a vertical panel again running the length of the page. Where Perez could have gone for the easy face shot in displaying this tragic moment, he chooses a much more difficult and ultimately more expressive method. Changeling is shown from the back as he cradles the body of the girl he had grown to love. We cannot see his face, but still the full emotion is transmitted to us. The human figures are drawn rather small against the backdrop of massive boulders, emphasizing both Changeling's loneliness and his sense of despair. Words of any kind would be a superfluous intrusion upon this scene, and Marv Wolfman wisely refrains from using any.

The next-to-last panel in the annual presents a tight close-up of Jericho's face in profile—specifically, of his eye, as a single tear wells from within and begins to roll down his cheek. The motif linking the four chapters of this saga has been carried through to its touching finale.

With the Titans' popularity at an all-time high, the decision was made to launch a second title starring the teenaged heroes; one printed offset on slicker paper. We'll examine Perez's work on this new book in short order.

On the original book, now re-titled *Tales of the Teen Titans*, Perez begins to do ever looser layouts, with more of the burden being shouldered by embellisher Mike DeCarlo. The result was a decline in artistic quality; again the stiffness in representation is evident.

Perez's graphic acumen was not completely lost to the book, however. The cover of issue #45 is

For the death of Tara Markov in **Annual** #3, Perez chooses a thin vertical panel, a more difficult but expressive shot. We can't see Changeling's face, but we can nevertheless feel his emotion.

also the first page of the story. While this is certainly not original to Perez, it is an excellent cover illustration. Aqualad, his face torn with desperation, holds an unconscious Aquagirl in his arms. Water drips from both figures, to pool on the floor.

The following issue features a delightful piece of artistic contrast, as we are introduced to the leader of the malevolent organization known as the H.I.V.E. She is a lovely, almost fragile woman, who sits enclosed within a circular glass case. A fluttering dove perches on her finger; flowers lay at her feet. Visually, she is the image of delicacy, yet she is capable of murdering without compunction.

Pages 11 and 12 of that issue dramatically portray the evil which is growing within Raven, as she mercilessly attacks her foes. Beginning to lose control, she very nearly kills the villains, and even lashes out at her fellow Titan, Aqualad.

Page 22 of issue #47 presents a chilling scene as the Titans at last gain entrance to the inner sanctum of the H.I.V.E., only to find the group's leaders dead. The mistress of the cartel had electrified the chairs of her cohorts before taking her own life. In a nice tragic touch, we see that even the dove has been slain, its limp body nestled in the woman's lap.

Perez was finding more and more of his time being spent on the newer, offset title, and consequently begins to cut back on his artistic contribution to the original title. For issue #48, he provides only the cover illustration and the pencils in a six-page back-up story. The splash page of that story demonstrates that Perez has not lost his flair for splendor and detail as we see Changeling and his girlfriend dwarfed by the arching elegance of his sumptuous mansion.

The final page of the story presents a touching symbolic scene. Raven is talking to Jericho—not face-to-face, but with the grim thickness of a wall between them. Her distance and isolation from the other Titans is inexorably increasing. Once again the color complements the message of the tableau. The wall behind Jericho is a light color, even as he himself is a person of light—a blond, guileless man-child. The wall behind Raven is a dark and somber violet; the woman is slumped in anguish, her face hidden in shadow.

Perez again performs only part-time duties in issue #49. A story pencilled by Carmine Infantino is sandwiched between a five-page prologue and a two-page epilogue rendered by Perez. He was using the time this afforded him to finish the double-sized 50th issue, which features the wedding of Donna Troy and Terry Long.

We will take a close look at that anniversary issue, after first reflecting on the body of work Perez has contributed to the new offset Titans book.

The New Teen Titans #1 presented the opening chapter leading to the resolution of Raven's internal conflict. It also provides the platform on which Perez demonstrates his complete mastery of the graphic arts.

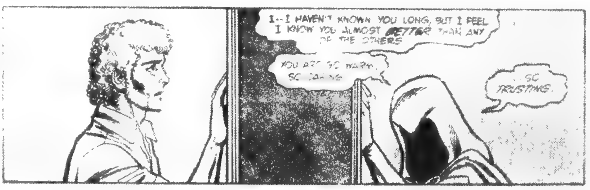
On page 7 of that issue, Jericho enters Raven's room, hoping to help her; to offer an emotional anchor which could save her from being swept away in the riptide of her father's evil. Raven is so deeply clouded in shadows that you cannot see her face clearly. The blackness spills over, filling even the borders of the page. This impenetrable darkness further emphasizes the fact that she must face her greatest horror alone, cut off from those who love her.

Later in the book, Cyborg examines a series of photographs of Raven. The photos show just how drastically her face had physically changed over the months; a change so gradual and subtle that both the Titans and most of the readers failed to notice it. It is a fine touch, doubtless arrived at jointly by Perez and Wolfman.

That night, Jericho uses his mutant ability to enter Raven's body, in an attempt to aid her. It is the beginning of a visual nightmare which outranks even that presented in issue #31 of the original series. Framed by a cut-out profile of Raven's head, Jericho "becomes" the woman, entering and experiencing the mystical, psychic hell she is enduring.

That hell is a blasted wasteland worthy of Hieronymus Bosch, the 15th-century painter. Spiralling columns cross its ashen skies, their substance formed by twisted, misshapen bodies congealed into a single living mass, each damned occupant's face horribly contorted. The image of Raven meets that of her mother; a woman reduced to little more than a scabrous, pitiable wretch.

Suddenly, the illusion form of Raven is stripped away to reveal Jericho—finds himself confronted by Trigon, in a two-page spread seething with malefic energy. The flesh itself is burned from Jericho's astral face, and his soul is saved only by the intervention of the real Raven. Artistically, it is a sequence that places Perez firmly in the upper echelon of comics artists. In presenting pulsatingly powerful



A touchingly symbolic scene, from issue #48.

From issue #50's wedding, a scene that sums up the intimate friendship of Donna and Dick

images, he need take second place to no one.

Despite having reached what many would consider to be the creative pinnacle, Perez has not been content to rest on his laurels. He continues to stretch, to experiment. Evidence of this can be found in the second issue of *NTT*, in which several pages are reproduced directly from Perez's pencils, with the exception of the backgrounds, which stand out sharply in red and yellow color holds.

Excellent use of this process is especially evident in a sequence that begins with the Titans being drawn into the dimension of Azareth. In a staggering two-page spread, we see the Titans astride the stone bridge leading into the city of Azareth proper, which is under siege by Trigon's demons. The process is used for several pages thereafter, culminating in the complete destruction of the city.

The issue ends with a full-page illustration of Trigon and Raven standing atop Titan's Tower, which has been transmuted to stone. Demon birds fly in a background of dark skies and coruscating energy.

NTT #3 carries one of the most striking title pages ever seen. The defeated Titans perch atop a massive column of bleak stones, set against a completely white background. In design and execution, it is proof of an artist nearing his creative zenith.

Never before have comics characters been faced with such scenes of visual despair. The Titans return to Earth in a two-page spread of stunning impact. The buildings around them are cracked and blasted, the streets pocked with gaping holes. Giant skeletal bones appear to grow from the very pavement. Twisting columns and bridges composed of entwined human bodies criss-cross the scene. There are no borders, as the picture fills the entirety of both pages.

On page 13, Perez combines his new technical wizardry with his old standby, the framing device. The main body of the illustration is done with color holds, as Raven repels Jericho's attempt to possess her. Around this, rendered in standard pen-and-ink, are thin vertical and horizontal panels featuring close-ups of the various other players in the drama.

A visual theme throughout this opening storyline is the corrupting, twisting influence of evil; a theme carried to its most striking representation on the cover of issue #5, in which the writhing, heavily shadowed bodies of the Titans actually form the features of Trigon's face.

Perez continues to get the maximum mileage from his use of color holds. Page 9 presents a patented Perez full-length illustration of the Titans bursting free from beneath a mound of rubble. The background, composed of blue color holds, provides brilliant balance against the beams of crimson and white blazing from Starfire and Cyborg. The same process is used with equally stunning effect in panel 1 of page 16, in which the body of Raven is borne aloft by her mystical rings.

The effect is carried over to page 21, which is of outstanding quality in its entirety. In a scene of unnerving force, Trigon is destroyed, withering beneath the power of goodness. Following his horrific demise, the spirit of Raven ascends from the flames of his passing (page 22), her facial features restored to their original soft beauty. Ultimately, innocence has emerged unscathed from the wrenching heart of darkness.

From the grim horror and awesome power of the Raven/Trigon storyline, Perez would make a 180-degree turn to render the placid pageantry and gentle love presented in *Tales of the Teen Titans* #50—the wedding of Donna Troy and Terry Long.

The book opens with a full-page picture of Paradise Island. A great deal of time was obviously lavished on depicting the beautiful detail of the Greek architecture. The structures display a richness of design yet simplicity of form which would have appealed to the ancient Hellenes.

The one somber moment in the course of events occurs on page 8 which is composed of five vertical panels focusing on Raven (remember that, chronologically speaking, this story takes place before those recounted in *NTT* #1-#5). In an alien dimension, she sits alone. Perez pans in on her form until, in a close-up profile, we see a single tear slide from the

shadows obscuring her face.

On page 20, Perez carries his use of the framing device to its ultimate form. The action of the page is carried in two rows, each composed of four vertical panels. Running completely around the border of the page is a series of small panels containing head shots of the wedding guests—46 of them in all! As they appear on the actual comics page, each panel is smaller in size than a postage stamp. Appropriately enough, one of the guests, who can be seen wiping away a sentimental tear, is Perez himself (with Wolfman in attendance as well).

On the following page, Donna and Terry kiss as the ceremony concludes. In a bit of artistic discretion, Perez, who begins with a tight shot of the embracing couple, slowly pulls away from them. The book ends with a full-page illustration of the plane carrying the newlyweds on to their honeymoon. To enhance the design of the picture, Perez breaks it into 18 panels of varying heights and widths.

It is a beautiful story, and if there is a single picture that captures the essence of the beauty, it is panel 8 of page 14. It is a simple profile shot of Donna Troy, set against a blank yellow background. The young woman bites down softly on her lip as she tells her old friend and comrade Dick Grayson that she loves him. Perhaps the relative simplicity of the panel is what makes it so effective, and affecting.

Most of all, this single panel symbolizes Perez's arrival as a complete artist. Both power and pathos are firmly in his command. He can shatter your senses with an exploding star—or melt your heart with a tender smile.

. . . .

At the time of this writing, Perez has taken a leave of absence from both the Titans books. On those books, in the space of four years, he has taken the rudimentary tools of art he had begun to develop at Marvel, and sharpened them into precision instruments for artistic expression.

The story of Perez's evolution as an artist is far from over. The end of 1984 saw the release of DC Comics' newest 12-issue maxi-series, an opus titled *Crisis on Infinite Earths*. With the team of Wolfman and Perez handling the story and art, it promises to be the most significant series to be published by DC since—well, since that first, unheralded issue of *The New Teen Titans*.

With his record of excellence, and the likelihood of even greater success in the future, there seems little doubt that the collective eyes of fandom will continue to . . . focus on George Perez.

Good luck, you two!

Mark Waid writes extensively for **Amazing Heroes**, and has sold scripts to DC Comics. R.A. Jones is **Amazing Heroes'** resident critic.

IN SEARCH OF PEREZ'S STORYTELLING

R.C. Harvey explores the visual flair that George Perez gives the Teen Titans, discovering why it works so successfully.

Upon first looking into George Perez's *New Teen Titans* in the summer of 1980, I was struck by how pretty his people looked and how copiously his detail abounded. Every panel revealed a finicky attentiveness to detail, a fussiness that approached obsession—all rendered and embellished with a refined and delicate line by Romeo Tanghal. This prim meticulousness emphasized the mincing prettification of everything: the effect of rendering even the scruffiest back alley in fastidious detail was to bring pristine order to what ought to have been a jumble of dust and garbage. His people were statuesque hunks and glossy glamor girls, hothouse heroes and heroines cavorting in shapely perfection amid uncluttered and tastefully appointed settings. It was all too unblemished, too exquisite.

GUESS I'VE BEEN HANGIN' TITANS SO MUCH THAT I REALLY AM DIFFERENT
I FORGOT HOW
I MEAN I ORIGINALLY TONED 'EM JUST TO BE A FREAK AMONGST THE FREAKS
BUT NOW I GOTTA REMEMBER I LIVE IN THE REAL WORLD, TOO. MY WHOLE LIFE CAN'T BE SPENT PLAYIN' SUPER-HERO.
A "freak" flanked by everyday people.

And it was all marvelously drawn.

Last week, I looked into three issues of *The Fantastic Four* that Perez did in 1977. The panels in these, too, were compulsively detailed. But as inked by Joe Sinnott, the faces of Perez's people took on the familiar House Look, and the wealth of detail, rendered with a line that varied in width more frequently than Tanghal's, seemed somehow less overpowering because not every tiny squiggle was given the same visual impact. But there was another difference: page layouts in the *FF* issues were much more conventional than those in the *Titans*.

In attempting to account for Perez's seemly sudden popularity with the emergence of the *New Teen Titans* books, I'm tempted to seize upon his approach to page layout as part of the reason. Another part, of course, is his association with Marv Wolfman, which resulted in the creation of characters and situations and stories that engaged the imaginations of readers. But in the visualizing of those stories, Perez made his own individual donation to the success of the series. The task here is to analyze his method by way of identifying precisely his unique contribution.

There are certain obvious contributions. That Raven in costume looks like her namesake, that fold of her hood suggesting the beak of that soulful bird, is due to

An early battle scene, done for Marvel's black-and-white magazine line.

SURE KID.
HIT ONE TO RIGHT FIELD FOR ME, HUH?
M-MISTER, YOUR HAND!
NUTS! HE'S GONNA SCREAM. MUST THINK I'M SOME KIND'A MONSTER!
BUT...
WOW, IT'S REAL NEAT. I WISH THEY GAVE ME ONE LIKE THAT.

Cyborg meets children with his same affliction in issue #8.

Perez's influence. And, as Wolfman says, Perez "came up with the look and mood of Raven's soul-self." And probably the treatment of Koriand'r in flight—her long hair streaming behind her in a blazing con-trail—is another Perez touch. But I'm concerned here more with the artist's way of telling a story visually than with such tinctures of characterization, however large these tiny touches may loom in the aggregate.

For the purposes of analysis (although not at all in the practice of the art), visual storytelling can be discussed in three compartments: narrative breakdown, panel composition, and page layout.

The essential narrative result of breaking the action into separate sequential panels is timing. Perez's impact here is modest. Although he sometimes times a sequence of panels for dramatic effect (most often, those involving the emotional lives of the Titans), there is nothing particularly innovative in his method.

Take for instance, Victor Stone, who, wallowing in his own self-pity, comes upon a bunch of kids with prosthetic appendages, learning to play baseball in the park (*NTT* #8). In a highly charged sequence, Cyborg discovers that the kids are handicapped in the way he is (but with less spectacular abilities), and when he realizes that they do not regard him as a freakish monster—on the contrary, they seem to look up to him as a sort of model—his self-pity disappears, and he joins them in play.

Coming on the heels of Victor's rejection by a former girlfriend, the sequence is very effective. But Perez handles it in a thoroughly conventional way: his layout is a regulation three-tiered page breakdown staged in simple units of narrative disclosure, three or four rectangular panels per tier. Contrasting to his usually extremely varied layouts, his treatment here is markedly restrained. And the restraint, by muting visual excitement, adds considerably to the emotional impact of the scene. His storytelling instincts in this case are absolutely right; I'm not trying to fault him for his conventional approach. I'm saying only that there is nothing unusual or innovative in his breakdown, or timing, of the action.

Before all the assembled Perezites begin heaving vegetables my way and clamoring for what's left of my scalp, please note that I am not charging him with incompetence. I haven't said he doesn't know how to manage narrative breakdown. I've merely said that there's nothing novel about his handling of it. Nor have I said that he fails to time events dramatically; he clearly does achieve dramatic timing in such sequences. But his signal ability, his stylistic hallmark as a storyteller, does not lay in this department.

In another emotional scene, one involving Donna Troy, Perez times the episode more noticeably—that is, in a way that reveals a greater consciousness of the resources of his medium. In *NTT* #28, Donna goes to Terry Long's apartment to keep a date. She finds Terry with his ex-wife discussing their daughter's education and related matters. It is obvious that this

Perez's layouts serve to underscore Donna's emotional isolation. From issue #28.

conversation will derail the plans Donna and Terry have made, so Donna bows out, cancelling the date.

Perez builds towards this scene with three panels that show Donna approaching Terry's apartment and letting herself in. Her pleasurable anticipation is thus dwelt upon in both picture and narrative caption by way of stressing the disappointment to come. When Donna leaves Terry's apartment, Perez give us two parallel vertical panels: in the first silent panel, Donna is shown leaving the apartment, the door just closed behind her; in the second, we see her walking away—all background detail gone, a tiny solitary figure surrounded by sterile white space, exclaiming quietly to herself, "Damn." Perez's method here underscores Donna's loneliness and disappointment: In presenting the final moments of the scene in two panels, he times the conclusion building towards the impact of her last word, building suspense by prolonging the moments.

But it is more with layout and composition that Perez gets his effect. Breakdown helps: it creates a sense of time, and with it, a pause, a momentary lull. But the narrow parallel panels with Donna but a small figure in them enhance the feeling of isolation and loneliness that the scene conveys.

Perez's use of layout and composition for expressive purposes can be seen elsewhere, too—in that staple of heroic comic-book literature, the fight scene. Perez almost never stages action scenes in continuous sequence—with a succession of panels depicting the progression of activity, movement by movement, as it were. Such maneuvering, although scarcely innovative, adds an element of time to a sequence, and time can be employed for dramatic impact.

But Perez draws fight scenes in explosive, individual panels: each one giving us a visually exciting moment of the action, each one virtually disconnected from the scenes in the panels coming before and after it. While this method heightens the visual excitement of the sequence, it lacks drama.

For an action scene, Perez typically slices up the page into

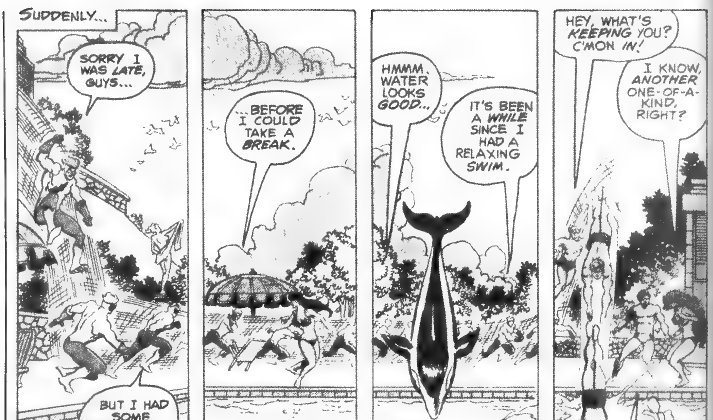
"REAL ALBERT', STOKE' QUIT MAKIN' LIKE SOME PHILOSOPHER WHILE THEY SNEAK RIGHT UP ON YA!
UH-OH! WATCH THAT FIRST STEP--
--IT'S A REAL DOOZY!
TALK ABOUT YOUR LIFE HANGING BY A THREAD!
AN' SPEAKIN' A' BAD JOKES--
--WHAT GOES DOWN--
ONE CLIFF-HANGER AFTER ANOTHER!
--MUST COME UP!
STEEL THREADS, MEBBE, BUT EVEN THEY WON'T LAST FOREVER!
CLIFF-HANGER = BAD JOKE STONE
HEY, GUYS, EVER HAVE ONE OF THOSE DAYS WHEN YOU SHOULD'A STOOD IN BED?
GRABBED HOLD, BUT SOMEHOW I DON'T FEEL ALL THAT SAFE
PULLED MY ARM OUT TO ITS FURTHEST--
FEEL LIKE I'M IN THE MIDDLE OF THE LOST ARM!
A typically effective use of horizontal and vertical panels from issue #15.

narrow horizontal or vertical panels, the shapes of the panels echoing the thrust of the action in them. And this technique is not restricted to action sequences.

The narrow panel, a vertical slice of time usually, is a device he frequently resorts to. Often, the choice is dictated by the scene (which may call for stressing height, for example); but not always. Sometimes pages turn into collages, vertical panels overlayed by tiny square panels, containing vignettes of action taking place elsewhere simultaneously or closeups of the characters in the action. Sometimes this mosaic device is successful; often, not.

Perez also shifts the camera rapidly from panel to panel, varying distance and angle. And he makes dramatic use of unusual angles and perspectives, particularly on splash pages.

All of these manipulations create visually exciting pages through the wild, albeit meticulously coordinated variety of their appearance. And Perez's scrupulous attention to detail, is, in this context, a significant part of his storytelling style. No matter how narrow the panel, he successfully crams detail


SUDDENLY...
SORRY I WAS LATE, GUYS...
BUT I HAD SOME HOMEWORK TO DO...
BEFORE I COULD TAKE A BREAK.
HMMM. WATER LOOKS GOOD...
IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE I HAD A RELAXING SWIM.
HEY, WHAT'S KEEPING YOU? C'MON IN!
I KNOW, ANOTHER ONE-OF-A-KIND, RIGHT?
NOT QUITE. BUT DON'T WORRY, YOU'LL LEARN!
14

This neat visual trick makes us aware of just how fast Kid Flash really is. From issue #2.

into it. Nearly every panel is filled with drawing. The reader, depending upon his proclivities, is either overwhelmed or wholly absorbed by such graphic profusiveness.

Perez's storytelling style clearly derives its distinctive character from his manner of composing panels and laying out pages rather than from the way he times action through narrative breakdown. But to identify the marks of his style is not to say that he is limited to stylistic performances only. Consider, for instance, page 15 of *NTT* #15, printed on the previous page, which is, among other things, a particularly effective deployment of horizontal and vertical panels.

Cyborg has just been bopped by a beam from one of the baddies, and the narrow, horizontal cut of the opening panel accents the force of the blow. Perez's layout then dramatically emphasizes the course of the action by shifting to a vertical grid. The abruptness of the shift in combination with the plunging verticality of the first panel startles us with immediate recognition of Cyborg's predicament. A stack of three tiny closeups heightens the suspense by focusing on his situation, then another vertical panel sets up the circumstance he must face next: the shape of the panel permits Perez to show us, from an unusual angle, Cyborg's being approached simultaneously from opposite directions by two attackers in their jet-propelled bio-suits. With the situation thus clearly depicted, Perez can switch to another closeup in panel 7: Cyborg presses the button that will reel him upwards. And in panel 8, with the image of Cyborg's relative location to his attackers at our elbow, he reveals the approaching denouement of the sequence. Here the absence of background detail enables us to grasp quickly the situation, and panel 9 leaves us in no doubt as to its outcome.

It's a virtuoso piece of work. Although not an entirely typical Perez page, this sequence shows his mastery of the medium. Breakdown, composition, and layout are carefully orchestrated into a telling whole, each operation reinforcing the effects of the others. It is atypical in breakdown: as I've said, Perez seldom stages action as continuously as this, focusing from start to finish on a single piece of business, showing its development step by consecutive step. But the humorous—even punchline—conclusion here requires careful, continuous staging and timing. And Perez is clearly capable of doing it. Well.

Perez is also capable of the kind of visual gimmickry that delights by exploiting the nature of the medium. My favorite example of this kind of unabashed artifice is in *NTT* #2. The Titans are swimming in the pool in Garfield (Changeling) Logan's estate when Kid Flash arrives. One entire tier is a panoramic picture of the swimming

pool with the Titans gathered variously around it. The multiple images of Kid Flash impress us with his spectacular speed, but dividing the tier into four panels enhances that impression.

Forced to focus four separate times on facets of a static scene before us, we become increasingly aware of Kid Flash's speed: he is the only thing moving. He leaps to poolside, races along the edge, changes into swimming trunks, and dives into the water—all in so short a lapse of time that nothing else has moved. The Changeling, for the moment in the shape of a dolphin, is suspended in mid-dive in panel 3. Panel 3 is but part of the same scene through which Kid Flash flashes with such terrific speed that all other motion, like the dolphin's dive, seems suspended, stopped, in comparison.

It's a neat visual trick and well done. While it's amusing to see the resources of the medium employed in such a fashion, the display has little narrative impact except to demonstrate Kid Flash's well-known prowess. But that is not to say that Perez made bad use of the trick: he has done nothing to distract from his story, and he has made us smile—both at Kid Flash's showing off and at the cleverness of the trick. Making a reader smile is a worthy objective for a storyteller. And Perez has done it in a way that can be accomplished only in this medium by skillfully marshalling panel composition and layout to the task.

For the sake of argument, I've constructed several phantom hurdles over which I've tried to take Perez. I've suggested that his stylistic achievement as a graphic storyteller could be identified by pigeonholing it in one or two of the three aspects of the art—narrative breakdown, panel composition, or page layout. His performance in one or more of these departments ought, I've implied, to isolate for us the uniqueness of his capability as a cartoonist.

That this is a somewhat fallacious procedure ought to have been apparent at the outset. The practice of the art (as I strenuously implied; remember?) embraces all three operations simultaneously: one hand washes the others. It would be impossible to lay out a page without considering the composition of the panels within that layout, and the layout itself involves breaking the story into narrative units, the panels themselves. Moreover, the effectiveness of narrative breakdown is enhanced by layout and composition; composition, by layout and breakdown; layout, by breakdown and composition.

For the purposes of discussion, it has been useful (to me, at any rate) to examine these aspects of the art as if they each involved a separate, discrete operation by the artist. While this perverse method of proceeding has enabled me to assert that Perez's storytelling technique relies more upon layout and composition than upon narrative breakdown, I hope it has become apparent that these three operations are not separable—in either execution or in effect. They work together in both instances.

And it should be equally evident that Perez is marvelously adept at enhancing the stories he tells by effectively deploying these techniques of graphic storytelling. His uniqueness as a cartoonist is probably most palpable in his graphic style alone—in the way he draws a picture, in his use of the pencil, in the shape and construction of a face, in the proportions of his figures, in his passion for detail and for cleanly rendered (and therefore prettified) pictures.

As a graphic storyteller, on the other hand, he is not so unique. In his manner of telling a story, he is not particularly innovative: he uses the same devices and maneuvers that others have used just as effectively elsewhere.

But he is conscious of the resources of his medium, of the array of its properties and of the way to develop them. And he uses those resources. He exploits them. He may not plumb the potential of the medium, but he ranges widely across its possibilities.

Hmm. Now that I think about it, I take it back: compared to many of his storytelling fellows, Perez is unique.

R.C. Harvey is a frequent contributor to **The Comics Journal**, and is currently working on the definitive biography of Milton Caniff.

AVENGING ARTISTRY

R.A. Jones examines George Perez's stint on The Avengers.

From Perez's debut in issue #141, unflatteringly inked by Vinnie Colletta.

IF OUR SUSPICIONS ARE CORRECT, YOUR FRIEND HAS BEEN TRAPPED IN TIME --TO LURE THE REST OF US TO OUR DOOM!
IT DOESN'T TAKE MUCH OF A GENIUS TO FIGURE OUT WHO DID IT, EITHER!

George Perez made his big move into Marvel's color comics in 1975. Until that time, his energies had been devoted to the Man-Wolf's adventures, appearing in *Creatures on the Loose*. From this rather minor-league strip he would soon find himself thrust into the spotlight as penciller on several of Marvel's major titles.

In June of that year, Marvel launched a new series starring the incomparable Inhumans, with Perez chosen as its premiere artist. The following month he supplied a fill-in job for *The Fantastic Four*, a book on which he would soon become a regular penciller. That same month, he was assigned the job of working on yet another team book; one that would see some of his finest artistic efforts.

That book was *The Avengers*.

The timing was perfect for Perez. Scripter Steve Englehart had been guiding the book through one of its finest periods storywise, but artistically it needed an injection of strong new talent. The preceding issues had seen the competent but uninspiring pencil work of George Tuska, who proved to be unsatisfactory to many of the readers.

Perez arrived just as a new major storyline was begun, in issue 141 ("The Phantom Empire"). The story would have two diverse components; the first involving the search for Hawkeye, who had become stranded in Earth's past; the second embroiling the Avengers in conflict with the monolithic Brand Corporation. The saga would require nine months—seven issues—to completely unfold.

It was not a particularly outstanding debut for Perez. His pencils were embellished by Vince Colletta, a fine inker but one whose style did not complement Perez's. Perez's figures tended to be stiff and bulky, and his portrayal of certain heroes was rather weak, particularly Iron Man. The latter was not entirely Perez's fault, for at that time the decision had been made to add a nosepiece to Iron Man's headgear, giving the character a ludicrous appearance regardless of who drew him.

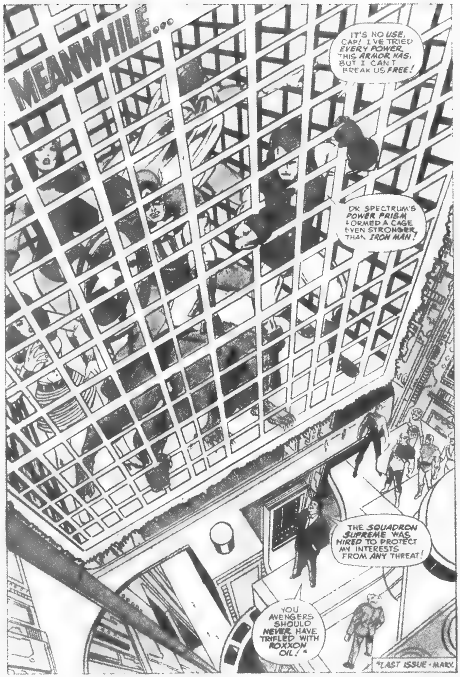
Perez, in this initial effort, employed an overly bizarre layout, which he would soon drop. He did not apply as fine a line as he would in the future, and his work was, suprisingly, somewhat lacking in detail—attention to which is now one of the hallmarks of his art. In addition, the faces he drew were often devoid of expression.

Despite these shortcomings, it was apparent that Perez possessed the tools to become a major talent. His female characters were portrayed excellently, as was Thor. His skill as an action artist was already well developed, as evidenced on pages 17-18, where Thor and Moondragon fought the villainous Kang the Conqueror in an ever-shifting time stream. Even at this fairly early stage of development, he also exhibited his ability to fit eight or ten or even more panels into a single page without giving his art the appearance of being cramped.

It was not a first outing that would garner any awards, but it did make people sit up and take notice. Those with a discerning eye could see the seeds of excellence in the work of this young artist from the South Bronx.

The following issue ("Go West, Young Gods") gave Perez the opportunity to draw five of Marvel's Old West heroes, with whom Thor, Moondragon and Hawkeye teamed up in the year 1873. It was an excellent plot device, but the need

A 1978 rendition of the Beast, done while Perez was on the **Avengers.**


MEANWHILE...
IT'S NO USE, CAP! I'VE TRIED EVERY POWER, THIS ARMOR HAS, BUT I CAN'T BREAK US FREE!
DK SPECTRUM'S POWER PRISM FORMED A CAGE EVEN STRONGER THAN IRON MAN'!
THE SQUADRON SUPREME WAS HIRED TO PROTECT MY INTERESTS FROM ANY THREAT!
YOU AVENGERS SHOULD NEVER HAVE TRAVELED WITH ROXXON OIL!
*LAST ISSUE - MARV.

to depict horses served to emphasize one of Perez's weaknesses at that time—his depiction of animals.

Still, the penciller was already showing signs of improvement. Page 14 contained an excellent full-page illustration of the remaining Avengers locked in a cage which was suspended high above the floor of the building in which it was housed. The fine use of perspective and detail are especially noteworthy. The bars of the cage alone doubtless required hours of painstaking work

He was displaying more line work on his faces as well. One weak spot here was his use of what—for lack of better phraseology—I will call "The up-the-nose shot." This will be familiar to fans of Gil Kane's art, but Perez took this angled view even farther, drawing it as though you were looking at the character's face from directly below his chin. Perez has since perfected this shot, but at that time, it often came off as rather ridiculous-looking.

That issue also saw him use, for the first time in this book, an artistic technique I will henceforth refer to as simply "the framing device." The framing device is a technique of offsetting the main body of a drawing or even an entire page with something other than the basic traditional panel borders. There are two good examples of its use in this issue, which will help define and illustrate this term.

The first involves the use of an entire page (page 17). The action of the story is carried in three panels running down the center of the page. Running down either side of the page are thin vertical panels containing pictures of the different cowboy heroes and Hawkeye. While these panels do not advance any action, the angle of the characters directs your attention to the center of the page where the action does take place.

A lesser use of this technique is found on page 30, panel 1. The Two-Gun Kid is leaping from a precipice. Above and behind him is the full moon, serving almost as a spotlight to focus attention on the character. I will be making several more references to the use of the framing device, for it is a technique Perez has honed to a high degree of excellence.

It is a fitting touch of irony that the Avengers' antagonist in this first storyline (in addition to Kang) was the Squadron Supreme. The Squadron was a superhero team dwelling on an alternate Earth. They also just happened to be a parody of DC Comics' Justice League of America. So it was that, in a manner of speaking, Perez was able to draw the Avengers/JLA team-up he would be denied the opportunity to tackle nearly a decade later.

Issue 143 opened with an extremely well executed splash page. The reader is looking from the viewpoint of a man whose upraised hands can be seen in the foreground, projecting from either side of the border. In the background, the Rawhide Kid can be seen pointing his pistol straight at "you." Perez's penchant for detail is beginning to assert itself at this point, as is displayed on Rawhide's holster.

Enhancing the quality of the art on this issue was the fact that it was inked by Sam Grainger, who employed a much cleaner stroke than did Colletta; one which allowed more of Perez's own style to show through. At this point though, that style was still a bit simple, almost cartoonish in spots.

For every moment of artistic strength he displayed, he showed a countering moment of weakness. On page 10, panel 4 is an excellent scene. In the foreground, Haweye is casting off a disguising overcoat as he cries out, "Avengers Assemble!" Muscles ripple across his firm stomach, and it is a visually exciting picture. Just a few pages later, the heroes face a monster Kang had created by mutating a coyote. It is so simplistically rendered that it looks almost crude, harkening back to Perez's first, disastrous job in one of Marvel's black-and-white horror magazines.

On page 27, panel 9, Perez shows a close-up of Kang's eyes as he realizes he is about to be beaten by Thor. You can see sweat pouring into those eyes, the fear as Kang comes to the realization of his downfall. This escalates into a scene where Kang seems to be literally torn apart by his own power gone out of control. It is an affecting scene, one which displays Perez's growth in depicting various emotions. Yet on the final page he renders a drawing of Moondragon crying which makes her look more like a plastic doll than a human being. Growth was indeed evident, but he had not yet reached his full height.

Issue 144 teamed Perez with Mike Esposito, who, while not being a particularly strong inker, here contributed one of his better efforts. Again the issue opened with an intricate and effective splash page. The modern day Avengers are standing on a catwalk in a massive, machinery-laden room that continues on below them for half a mile. Film buffs might recognize it as being reminiscent of a scene from the classic motion picture *Forbidden Planet*.

Eyes are the mirror of the soul—and Kang's eyes look plenty scared. From issue #143.

He repeated his good use of the full-page illustration later in that same issue, when the woman named Patsy Walker assumes the costumed identity of The Hellcat. She is crouched atop a packing crate, a cocky grin tugging at her lips, illuminated by an overhead light.

In the final panel of that issue, Hugh Jones, President of the Brand Corporation, teleports the Avengers to the alternate Earth which is the home of the Squadron Supreme. The story closes as effectively as it began, as a dozen heroes are caught in a swirling vortex which has Jones's laughing face at its center.

At this point, deadline problems struck either Perez or Englehart (or both), necessitating the insertion of a two-part fill-in story—written by Tony Isabella and drawn by Don Heck. The regular creative team was back on track with issue 147 ("Crisis on Other Earth"), with inker Vince Colletta back once again.

In this issue, Perez made good use of one of the more cinematic techniques used in comics; a sequence of closely connected panels which simulates a camera shot. The first of these came in six panels at the top of page 14. From high above, you are looking down at two women sunbathing on a rooftop. The "camera" pans in on them as a shadow passes over. You focus on one of the women's faces as her eyes begin to open, leading into a close-up of one eye opened wide in surprise. You then switch to the women's viewpoint and see Iron Man and the Vision flying overhead. The two sunbathers, by the way, were Lois (as in Lane) and Lonni (as in Lana Lang).

On page 27, Perez employs the framing device beautifully. The right-hand two-thirds of the page depicts a fight between the Vision and the Squadron Supreme; but the truly important conflict takes place down the left side, in a series of three pictures depicting the Scarlet Witch's struggle to resist the mind-altering influence of the Serpent Crown.

The above two techniques are actually combined in a single panel on page 30. The Vision thrusts his dematerialized hand into the chest of his opponent, Hyperion. Within the frame of this larger panel are three small sequential panels, zooming in on Hyperion's mouth as he screams.

In the letter column of that issue, it was reported that reader response to Perez's artwork was overwhelmingly favorable. It also predicted that Perez was "another of those guys like Smith and Starlin who's going to transform himself right before your eyes." As they said, he was already doing so.

Sam Grainger returned as inker in issue 148, as Perez continued to show his flair for depicting battle

A burst of power from **Avengers** #143.

scenes. His portrayal of the Avengers was improving, most notably on the Beast. In general his art was beginning to flow more and more smoothly.

Page 17, panel 14 offers a lovely example of his continuing use of framing device. Captain America is hurling his shield. There is no conventional panel border around him, but there is a vertical panel drawn behind them. The panel is filled with numerous small circles, creating a delicate contrast to the dynamic action of the central character.

Perez's credentials as an action artist were even more firmly established in the following issue. In a single panel, occupying approximately two-thirds of page three, he depicts the Avengers battling in the midst of no fewer than 18 opponents. Even more powerful is the battle between Thor and the villain called Orka, the Human Killer Whale. The sequence escalates in intensity, culminating in a blinding storm summoned by the Thunder God. The dominant image is one of Thor, arms upraised as the storm rages about him.

This marked the end of the long Kang/Brand Corporation storyline, and led to the 150th issue, the anniversary of the title, which would herald a shake-up in both the Avengers and their creative team. Deadline problems again arose, allowing Perez to draw only the first six pages, with the remainder of the book devoted to reprinted material.

For issue 151, Gerry Conway and Jim Shooter joined Englehart in the scripting department, with Conway subsequently becoming the book's solo writer. With the story told largely in the style of a television documentary, it presented Perez with the opportunity to draw practically every hero in the Marvel Universe, which he did admirably —decisively proving his artistic versatility.

Perez then took a short break, as veteran Avengers penciller John Buscema stepped in to deliver a pair of fine issues. When Perez returned, it would mark the beginning of what would arguably be his finest period on this title.

Avengers #154 saw not only the return of George Perez, but also the addition of Pablo Marcos to the artistic team. Marcos proved to be far and away the best of the inkers who had thus far worked with Perez on this book.

Perez was adding even more detail to his pencil work than ever before. A good example of this can be found on page 7, in a sequence in which the Scarlet Witch walks from inside Avengers Mansion to the garden outside. From the stone pattern of the floor, to a mirror reflecting the woman's image, to the individual roses in the garden, the attention to detail is outstanding. This is the sort of thing which does absolutely nothing to advance the story, and of which many readers are not even consciously aware, but it is one of the key elements in raising an artist from the commonplace to a position of high quality.

Twice in this issue he made effective use of three-panel sequential scenes. The first comes on page 10 in a trio of small panels. The first focuses on a blue orb surrounded by total blackness. It is only as the sequence progresses, and as you pull back, that you realize the orb was one of the Vision's eyes.

On page 26, Perez reversed the process, moving from the far shot to

NOW FOR ANOTHER SCENE SHIFT--JUST WHEN WE'VE WHETTED YOUR INTEREST ONCE MORE, IT'S TIME TO AVENGERS MANSION, WHERE--
IRON MAN JUST PHONED ME--TO "E--ME I TOOK--I NEED TO WORRY ANYMORE ABOUT THE LIVING LASER OR THE SERPENT CROWN.
BUT HIS OTHER NEWS--ABOUT MY FATHER. THE WHIZZER--AND HIS MORALITY--
WELL THERE'S NO CHOICE.
EVEN THOUGH DAD DID DISAPPEAR WITHOUT A WORD--
EVEN THOUGH I BELIEVE HE DELIBERATELY MISSED MY WEDDING TO THE VISION--
--HE'S STILL THE FLESH OF MY FLESH--
--AND I MUST GO TO HIM.
AS FOR MY OWN TROUBLES--I'LL JUST HAVE TO PUT THEM ASIDE.
BUT, AS WANDA STRIDES PURPOSEFULLY INTO THE GARDEN COURTYARD WHICH HALF-CIRCLES THE HOUSE--

From Perez's return in issue #154. Note the attention to detail—the stone pattern in the walkway, Wanda's reflection in the mirror, and the trees in the garden.

the close-up. Iron Man leaps to attack a villainous Atlantean, who crushes the Avenger's chestplate with his bare hand. The last panel in the progression is a medium close view of Iron Man's "face," in which Perez must depict the character's shocked expression largely through his eyes.

On page two and three of the following issue, Perez combined the framing device with the need to keep the action moving. On either side of the page, he depicts the various heroes and villains engaged in combat, while in the center of the page he presents the flashback scenes necessary to inform the readers as to what had previously occurred.

The power of Perez's pencilling was evident on page 14, in a panel depicting an enraged Sub-Mariner swooping through the air. The veins in his arms can be seen, practically bulging from the flesh. The picture has the appearance of having been taken by a camera tilted at a 45 degree angle, giving it a unique perspective and increasing the contrast between the blue-green ocean and the stark white sky. Pablo Marcos's inks were also beginning to mesh even more perfectly with Perez's pencils.

Unfortunately, those pencils were again missing over the next four issues. Perez's inability to continue on the book stemmed from the work he was doing on another title at the time—*Logan's Run* (based on the science-fiction film of the same name)—and from a brief illness he suffered Sal Buscema and Don Heck provided the pencils in his stead, with Marcos's inking providing at least a semblance of visual continuity.

Perez returned to the book with a proverbial bang in issue 160, delivering one of the finest artistic efforts of his career to that point. Strangely enough, though he had been connected with this title for 18 months, this was the first time he contributed the cover art (with the possible exception of isue #149). It was a chore he would assume often in the future. Jim Shooter was now scripting the book, providing strong stories for Perez to illustrate, and Pablo Marcos continued as inker.

As was becoming his habit, Perez began the issue with an extremely

Sudden impact from issue #160.

effective splash page, one which foreshadowed what was to come. In the foreground can be seen the deadly gleaming blade of a scythe. In the background, oblivious to the danger, stand five Avengers, with their backs to you, watching as yet more of their teammates fly away.

When the Avengers first see the villain who wields the scythe (the Grim Reaper), he is perched above them on an intricately detailed, Kirby-esque piece of machinery. His swinging scythe and its accompanying lines of motion travel outside the enclosing panel border. Perez demonstrates his ability to now show emotion deftly, for the Reaper's countenance fairly crawls with evidence of his madness.

Page 14 in its entirety is deserving of close examination. At the top is a thin horizontal panel of solid blackness, overlaid with a slightly shorter panel filled with flashing light, denoting a return to consciousness of the heroes, who had been beaten by the Grim Reaper. A series of five panels focuses on the faces of the awakening Avengers, connected by a stream of arcing energy. Finally, a large panel shows them seated at their conference table as the Reaper declares, "Court is now in session!"

Power was still Perez's forte, as can be seen in panel three of page 26, in which Wonder Man strikes the Grim Reaper—who is his brother; but he was also developing a sense of subtlety, as can be seen in that issue's final panel. Drifting smoke weaves in and out of the panel, melding with the border lines.

Throughout, Perez made increasingly good use of solid shading. Indeed, his overall art had improved tremendously since his last issue, though only four short months had passed in the interim.

As was becoming virtually a trademark for Perez, the splash page of the next issue was exceptional. In the foreground, Ant-Man and several ants, inside a section of the ceiling, are peering down at the Vision, Scarlet Witch, Iron Man and Captain America. Enhancing the effectiveness of this shot is the coloring which, surprisingly, is credited to scripter Jim Shooter. Ant-Man, the insects, and the bits of machinery around them are drawn with a heavy use of shading, and colored tones of blue, forming a contrasting frame around the Avengers, who are against a background of pure white.

By this point, Perez was no longer displaying weaknesses in his portrayal of any of the characters. His depiction of Iron Man is superb, especially his ability to show the metallic quality of the hero's armor. He had also improved tremendously in his drawings of Captain America, who for some reason had seemed to be one of the more difficult characters for Perez to grasp visually.

One small scene in the story

makes excellent use of the art to delineate character. On one wall of Henry (Ant-Man) Pym's home hangs a painting (or possibly a photograph). What sort of picture does scientist Henry Pym have in his home? A portrait of Reed Richards, perhaps the greatest scientific mind in the world. When coupled with the fact that many of Pym's recent experiments had been failures, the portrait further strengthens the image of Pym as a man who has become increasingly frustrated

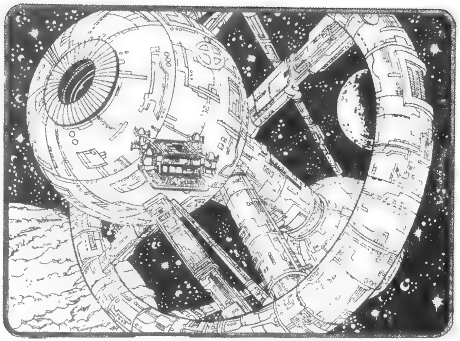
As was also his wont, Perez ended the issue on a powerful dramatic note. Jarvis, the Avengers' butler, returns to the mansion moments after his employers have been thoroughly beaten by the evil robot, Ultron. In the closing panel, viewed from overhead, the seven Avengers can be seen lying unconscious on the floor, with rubble strewn around and atop them. Captain America's right leg dangles over a jagged hole which had been blasted through the floor.

In the following issue, Perez made use of his familiar framing device, but in a more symbolic way. In the center of page six, Ultron has tricked Ant-Man into helping him transfer the Wasp's life force into Jocasta, a female robot intended to be Ultron's "bride." Down the left side is a thin panel displaying half of the Wasp's face; on the right side is an identical panel showing half of Jocasta's face. Thus, the art visually links the two characters, even as the story prepares to do so in a literal sense.

Perez contributed the cover for issue 163, but his art would not be found inside. Instead, we were presented with a fill-in story drawn by George Tuska. The story was only tenuously connected to the Avengers, having originally been intended for use either in *Iron Man* or the now-defunct team book, *The Champions*.

Perez's duties on *Fantastic Four* prevented him from doing the next three issues as well. The book did not suffer a severe decline in quality, however, for those issues were pencilled by yet another rising young star—John Byrne, ably assisted by Pablo Marcos's continued fine inking.

Issue 167 saw the return of Perez, as artistically strong as ever. If further evidence was needed of his attention to detail, it was provided in stunning fashion on page 3, panel 1. In a beautiful panoramic view of outer space, we (and the Avengers) see the S.H.I.E.L.D. space station, dwarfed by yet another massive station behind it, one literally covered with mechanical details. Below this panel can be seen four Avengers, awestruck by the spectacle.



Outer-space panorama: The Guardians' ship dwarfs the SHIELD space station in issue #167

Page 7 opens with a thin vertical panel showing Thor and Wonder Man flying over New York. Perez's cityscape below them is jammed full, as if the buildings are crushed against one another. In contrast, the next panel is a thin horizontal one, showing Avengers Mansion standing alone. He highlights this contrast by leaving the background blank and omitting the panel borders.

This story introduced the Avengers to the Guardians of the Galaxy and began what would come to be called "The Michael Saga," which would run—first as a sub-plot and then as the central story—through the next 10 issues.

The book ended with a fine sequence of contrasting images. As the Wasp, Yellowjacket and Nighthawk battle a gang of crooks at a fashion show, the man who had chosen to call himself Michael approaches a young model named Carina Walters. He says not a word, but simply extends his hand toward her. There is a close-up of each one's eyes, his seemingly drilling right through hers. She takes his hand and they slowly disappear—a quiet yet portentous sequence of events juxtaposed against the bedlam of the ongoing battle.

Issue 168 contained one of the most bizarre battles ever. The Guardian called Starhawk confronts Michael. The two enter into an eight-page fight that takes place on three levels; physically, psychically and astrally. It is on the astral plane that Michael defeats Starhawk, literally grinding him into dust. He then displays his overwhelming power by reforming the hero's body, though leaving it with no memory of what had transpired.

After this violent confrontation, Perez ended the issue with a placid yet foreboding three-panel progression. One: The exterior of the perfectly normal suburban home where Michael has taken up residence. Two: A medium far shot of Michael sitting under a lamp in an otherwise pitch black room. Three: A medium close-up of Michael's shadowed face, brow furrowed as he lays his plan for universal domination.

Deadline problems again forced a break in continuity, with issue 169 containing a fill-in story illustrated by Sal Buscema and Dave Hunt. Perez was back with the next issue. While Pablo Marcos continued as the interior inker, many of Perez's cover

illustrations would be inked by Terry Austin. As you might expect, this team-up of exceptionally fine penciller and inker almost always led to outstanding results. Of special interest in issue 170 is the fact that for the first, last, and the only time, Perez was credited with being co-plotter of the story.

The artistic highlight of issue 171 would have to be the cover. It spotlights the Scarlet Witch, holding her head as though in agony. The floor, walls, and ceiling of the room in which she is standing are composed of angular mirrors, reflecting the faces of Ultron and her fellow Avengers. A great deal of detail work is apparent in the room's furnishings, most notably a bookcase set against one wall and a statue and pedestal in the picture's right foreground.

After this all-too-brief return, Perez again left the book, though this time for a much longer period of time. Almost two years would pass before his work appeared inside a regular issue of the title. He did not completely sever his ties with the Avengers, however, supplying several covers (usually teamed with Austin) and the interior art on an annual.

Sal Buscema did the layouts on the two issues immediately following Perez's departure, as the Michael Saga moved into dominance. It was an epic story, for which Perez would have been ideally suited, but such was not to be. Instead, the artistic task fell to Dave Wenzel, a neophyte who—aided by inker Pablo Marcos—did a good job, but one which most observers would agree was nowhere near the level of Perez's work.

About the time the Michael Saga was drawing to a close (issue 177), *Avengers Annual #8* hit the stands, with pencils by Perez. Unfortunately, the majority of the book (with the exception of a few pages) was inked by Ricardo Villamonte (those few other pages being inked by Marcos). Villamonte is a fine inker, but his style proved to be rather ill-suited to combine with that of Perez.

The finest visual moment came, as you might expect, on the splash page. Yellowjacket, shrunk to insect size, is working on a multi-faceted prism. The illustration is similar to

that of the cover of issue 171, with no less than a dozen reflected images of Yellowjacket's face from different angles.

The monthly title was in a period of creative flux, carried by fill-in writers and artists while a more permanent team was being assembled. Issue 178 was scripted by Steve Gerber and illustrated by the team of Carmine Infantino and Rudy Nebres, with the next two issues being written by Tom DeFalco and pencilled by Jim Mooney.

With issue 181, David Michelinie became the book's scripter. Returning for his second stint as pencil artist was John Byrne, whose work—like that of Perez—had grown even stronger. The cover was illustrated by Perez and Austin, who managed to fit 24 different characters into the scene without making it appear cramped (page 11 would carry a nearly identical picture, by Byrne and inker Gene Day).

Though Perez would contribute an occasional cover, his other work was keeping him too busy to do the interior art. At this time he was

TOGETHER BECAUSE THEY'RE ALL OUTCASTS. THEY NEED EACH OTHER WHILE THE FANTASTIC FOUR, FOR THE MOST PART, ARE INTER-RELATED.
YOU'RE CRAZY, K'NATH.
AVENGERS
OH, WHATSA MATTER, CARRY'S LIL CHICKEN?
JUST THINK WHAT THE KIDS AT SCHOOL'RE GONNA SAY WHEN THEY HEAR BOUT THIS
SHE'S JUST THE REASON—HE OR SHE WANTS TO BE AN AVENGER!
WS ALL HAS ENMISE ABILITIES, BUT WE'VE FOUND OVERLOOK SYMPATHIZE THAT THEY— AND WELL—
PASTE
"...WORK EXCEPTIONALLY WELL TOGETHER."
AND THAT'S WHAT MAKES THE AVENGERS WORK AS A TEAM!
KIN-T, WH-WHERE YA GOIN'?
I GOTTA GO CHANGE MY PANTS SEE YA.
HEY, CAPTAIN, NOT ONLY ARE YOU A PHILOSOPHER BUT YOU'VE A SENSE OF HUMOR AS WELL. YOU SHOULD LET YOUR SHOW MORE OFTEN
I, UH, THAT'S MAYBE I'D BETTER GO VS. MARVEL IS GETTING A BIT CHILLY AREN'T
A classic sequence from **Avengers** #194.

working on a *Fantastic Four Annual*, a solo Iceman story (which appeared in *Bizarre Adventures* #27, July 1981), and a Black Widow series (which would collect dust for nearly six years before being presented in *Marvel Fanfare*).

Of the cover work he did during this period, the most outstanding was the one which graced issue 185. In the foreground of that cover stand the Scarlet Witch and her brother, Quicksilver. Quicksilver has one arm protectively around his sister, while with the other he points to something above and in front of them. A violent rainstorm is raging about them, while lightning rips the sky. The only other source of light is a lantern held by an elderly peasant standing behind the two main characters. The background—buildings, streets, mountains, and the sky—is colored entirely in shades of violet. Six months would pass before the book saw another Perez cover.

He returned as cover artist on issue 191, which also happened to be the last one pencilled by John Byrne. Fill-in artists Arvell Jones and Sal Buscema carried the artistic ball for the next two issues.

Issue 193 carried the news that the following month would see the return of George Perez as the strip's interior artist. It promised to be a period of unparalleled artistic achievement for Perez

But promises can go unfulfilled.

Perez's pencils were inked by Josef Rubinstein in issue 194. It was one of the finest efforts ever produced by Perez during his time with Marvel (matched only by *X-Men Annual #3*, with art by Perez and Austin, which had appeared two months earlier). Rubinstein was the strongest inker to work with Perez on this book, edging out even the earlier embellishments of Pablo Marcos. His use of Zip-A-Tones added a greater sense of depth to Perez's already outstanding pencils.

Art and story meshed perfectly, particularly in a classic sequence on page 10. Captain America and Ms. Marvel are walking through the snow-covered garden at Avengers Mansion, engaged in conversation. Peering over a nearby stone wall are a pair of mischievous boys, one of whom throws a snowball at the two heroes.

Without breaking stride, or looking away from Ms. Marvel, or interrupting the conversation, Cap nonchalantly slings his shield. It ricochets from a wall to a tree and then into the air, shattering the snowball before finally flying back into Cap's hand! It is a delightfully comical scene.

Perez again used humor on page 22, combining it with his old standby, the framing device. In the center of the page, a chuckling Beast watches television; behind him, Wonder Man wriggles in embarrassment. In vertical panels running down either side appears what is happening on the TV screen—Wonder Man's performance on a local kiddie show.

The book is filled with examples of graphic excellence. The portrayal of Iron Man. An enraged Vision wreaking havoc in a testing room filled with blazing weapons. An overhead establishing shot of the Avengers gathered around their conference table.

It appeared to be the beginning of an artistic renaissance for Perez. Instead, it proved to be a last outburst of excellence before a period of steep decline. Rubinstein left after this single collaboration. The inkers who followed would not be able to match his performance, and the art in subsequent issues seems much weaker.

The decline was not immediately apparent to anyone opening issue 195 to see one of Perez's stunning splash pages. In the snowy foreground stand the Avengers, but what really rivets your attention is the gothic mansion they are observing, in the background. The amount of detail and design work that went into this illustration is truly incredible.

The inking chores on this issue were divided between Dan Green and Jack Abel, both of whom are talented inkers, neither, however, would prove able to blend well with Perez. Green's inks tended to muddy Perez's pencils, while Abel's nearly overpowered them by injecting too much of his own style. Abel had done a terrific job on some of Perez's early work, but the artist no longer needed such a heavy hand going over his layouts The fact that Abel was suffering from poor health must surely have had a contributing effect on his work as well

There would still be fine touches to Perez's art, such as on page 3, panel 6. The new Ant-Man's head is shown in profile. It is finely shadowed; his helmet glistens with a genuine metallic sparkle—and in it you can see a reflection of Yellowjacket

Issue 196 was inked entirely by Abel, and contains one particularly nice sequence, a three-panel progression occurring in the middle of page 14. They are thin, horizontal panels which don't quite reach from border to border on the page The foreground is black and creates the impression that you are looking outward through the eye slots of Iron Man's armor. Small silhouettes of something can be detected around the edges of the slots, growing progressively thicker, to the point where they almost completely cover the slots. It is only when the scene shifts that you see the obstruction is actually a horde of ants crawling over the Avenger's faceplate.

The following issue carried a Perez cover, but it had been necessary for Carmine Infantino to step in and deliver the interior pencils, with a plethora of inkers applying the finishing touches; causing an occasionally jolting change of style from one page to the next.

Unfortunately, there was not a major improvement when Perez returned the next month, in an effort inked by Dan Green. There are actually several panels in which the art is not recognizable as being that of Perez (and possibly they weren't). The artwork on the following issue showed improvement, but it was still not up to Perez's final efforts of the past. The one exception to this is a truly lovely close-up of the Wasp, which appears on the final page. Alas, it was not enough.

The special double-sized 200th issue of *The Avengers* sported a beautiful symbolic cover by Perez and Austin. Inside, he showed some sign that the excellence was undiminished. On page 3 he once again employed the framing device within a framing device. Down the left and right borders are head shots of the Avengers. The heads are framed by vertical back panels, while they themselves form a frame around -and direct your attention to—the central action of the page; four panels in which Ms. Marvel gives birth to an infant boy.

Page 7 presented a nice combination of story and art, in a sequence in which the Beast hustles Hawkeye in a game of pool Perez also demonstrated in this issue that his ability to portray action was largely undiminished; but by most standards the art was simply not as good as some of his past efforts. With some exceptions, the fine line and detail work are missing, in places giving the art a rushed and sloppy appearance.

Issue 201 contains a wonderfully humorous cover. In the foreground is the Avengers' butler, wielding a vacuum cleaner and saying, "Stand back, Avengers—this is where Jarvis takes over!" Behind him stand his smiling employers. Especially priceless is the bemused expression on Captain America's face This cover illustration, like the previous one, shows that Perez's artistic talent had not vanished; that talent was simply not as much in evidence on his interior work.

A bit of the old Perez power does come through on page 12 of that issue. It is composed of three vertical panels running the length of the page, and depicts the Wasp being attacked by a menacing robot. It is a strong moment, rich with detail.

On issue 202, for the first time since his return to the book eight months before, Perez did not contribute the cover illustration (it was instead drawn by Dave Cockrum). Inside, Perez's pencils were inked by Mike Esposito. The result was the poorest art Perez had produced in years.

Even amidst this mediocrity, there were some signs of excellence, particularly in Perez's use of shadow—as on page 7, where the crisscrossing shadows from a glass door play across the Vision's face; and page 10, where Tony Stark's face is hidden within the shadow cast by the partly raised visor of his Iron Man armor. The remainder of the art, however, is terribly flat and lifeless

It was on this decidely sour note that Perez left the Avengers, and Marvel Comics as a whole. It was truly sad that his final effort was so weak, but it did not negate the fine creative contribution he had made to this book.

Time has shown that Perez was indeed on the verge of that artistic renaissance alluded to earlier It would simply come a little later, in the pages of another team book, for another company—DC Comics' *Teen Titans*. Perez would at last receive the acclaim and respect he so richly deserves as one of the finest craftsmen in the field of graphic art

The periods he spent as penciller of the Avengers might be described as ones of missed deadlines . . . and missed opportunities. But it should never be forgotten that the book served as one of the training grounds upon which he developed and polished his skills. Without the Avengers, and the Fantastic Four, and the Inhumans—there may have been no Teen Titans as they exist today.

George Perez—like all of us is a product of his past. The part of his past that saw him chronicle the adventures of Earth's mightiest heroes paved the way for his arrival as a truly outstanding artist.

R.A. Jones is **Amazing Heroes'** critic-in-residence, as well as being quite prolific.

PEREZ'S RUN

Lou Mougin takes a look at one of George Perez's early efforts, and finds it to be short but sweet.

After many of their movie-craze based titles of the '70s (such as the kung fu, monster, and blaxploitation titles) began to fade, Marvel Comics tried a new tack: adapting SF-oriented movies and TV shows directly to comics form. The first of these efforts had begun in 1974, and *Planet of the Apes* paid off well enough to run some 29 issues. Thus, the comic version of *Logan's Run*, two years later, wasn't without precedent.

The artist on the first five issues was George Perez.

Logan's wasn't at all bad for an archetypal action -adventure "B" SF movie; in fact, save for those godawful *Apes* sequels, it was probably the best-known flick of its kind, pre-*Star Wars*. Certainly it garnered enough attention to spawn a five-month TV series, with some recasting. There was even talk of movie and paperback sequels, which, thankfully, haven't appeared. It's nice to see an adventure movie these days which *doesn't* spawn an Ourobourous-cycle of follow-ups.

Now, as to the story itself: everyone knows that the *Logan's Run* tale is set in the 23rd century, right? And that mankind, devastated by pollution and overpopulation, has been reduced to living in giant pleasure domes, right? And that, to regulate their population, the cities terminate anyone who reaches his or her thirtieth birthday, right? And that Logan is one of an elite corps of Sandmen who go about snuffing

HOME: FOR SOME, A FEATURELESS CUBICLE; BUT FOR A SANDMAN, ONE OF THE URBAN ELITE--
--HOME CAN BE SOMETHING MORE.
FRANCIS WOULD TELL ME I'VE BEEN WORKING TOO HARD--
--AND HE MIGHT EVEN BE RIGHT.
IT'S BEEN WEEKS SINCE I CHECKED THE "AVAILABILITY" CIRCUIT--
--AND MAYBE THAT'S WHAT'S BOTHERING ME LATELY.
I NEED SOMEONE NEW. A WOMAN...
IN SECONDS, A DOZEN FACES FLICKER PAST ON THE LIFE-SIZE TRANSPORTER SCREEN; LOGAN SEES THEM ALL, REJECTS THEM, EACH, UNTIL--
YOU.
YOU'RE... PERFECT.
AUTOMATICALLY, HE KEYS THE MATERIALIZE BUTTON, AND THE WOMAN APPEARS; HER FACE A MIXTURE OF CURIOSITY AND FEAR...

--THEN FIND SANCTUARY! BECAUSE, IF WHAT THE COMPUTER SAID IS TRUE--NO ONE RENEWS!
WHICH MEANS--MY WHOLE LIFE HAS BEEN A LIE!
IN THE ENTIRE CITY.
--I'M THE ONLY MAN WHO KNOWS THE TRUTH!
NOT JUST FOR MY SAKE--BUT FOR EVERY-ONE'S--I'VE GOT TO SURVIVE!
I'VE GOT TO! I'VE GOT TO!

As the desperation increases, Perez closes in on the character.

out these unfortunates, and, after being assigned by the Powers That Be to discover the mysterious haven for Runners (called Sanctuary), he is summarily shafted out of several years of his life and decides to cut and run for real, pursued by other Sandmen, if not by the Ticktockman, right? Good Therefore there's no need for me to mention these details here. Glad you're such an informed bunch.

Well, by the time Marvel got their hands on the MGM film, George Perez had matured into a Darned Good Artist, and his work on the comic adaptation is something he's not unjustly proud of. In fact, the art would seem to be (at least, to this writer) the only reason for collecting this title. An adaptation of a movie is, as far as scripting goes, just an adaptation. (Archie Goodwin and Al Williamson's version of *The Empire Strikes Back*, for example, may have *looked* pretty, but Archie's original scripts for the non-adaptation issues of *Star Wars* outdistanced *Empire* by miles.) The Psychedrome with its demolition derby of costumed levitators, the pursuit of Runners by Sandmen, the conversion of a fallen corpse into a mound of dust and its subsequent vacuuming-up by a hovering garbageman—it's all done rather well by Perez. It resembles nothing so much as his version of Attilan in *The Inhumans*. Klaus Janson, whose first inking of Perez wasn't any great shakes in *Man-Wolf*, meshes nicely with him in this version. All in all, it wasn't a bad little comic book.

There were a few minor changes. The biggest one is that Marvel apparently wasn't allowed to use likenesses of the actors, possibly because the *Logan's Run* TV show was in production with a new cast For Logan, Michael York's Norwegian slab-like face has been rounded off for your leading-man-in-comics look. Jessica bears only a passing resemblance to Jenny Agutter. Farrah Fawcett Majors doesn't look much like the comic-book version of Holly, the nurse (maybe Marvel would have had to turn out a *Charlie's Angels* series if she had). The Wise Old Man looks a bit like Peter Ustinov, but there's been a bit of retouching. Still, not everything went by the wayside. Box the robot looks comfortably like Box in the comic.

Modelled on Farrah Fawcett-Majors?

One other minor alteration I caught (there may have been more that I didn't) was the rendition of the Runner's corpse into disposable trash by the garbageman. *Logan's Run*-the-movie has the trash collector spray the deceased, who turns into what appears to be 185 pounds of uncooked hamburger, and then melt and flow into a liquid substance which turns into vapor. *Logan's Run*-the comic, not allowed to use such measures, has the garbageman zap him with a ray which changes him into a large mound of rocky red sand, which metamorphoses into large red rocks, which are then vacuumed into the garbageman's collector. It may be more tasteful, but I cannot accept a corpse being turned into fallen masonry.

Since *Logan's Run* was intended to continue as a series beyond the movie adaptation, Marvel decreed that the adaptation stretch out over five issues. That way, hopefully, you could form a habit. Gerry Conway, the scripter for *Logan's Run* #1, left Marvel for DC after one issue, and Perez was paired with his partner from *Man-Wolf*, David Anthony Kraft. Dave did do a decent job on the deed, neither more nor less than the job called for. Klaus Janson continued as inker. So it went.

Logan allied himself with Jessica, a dissident, battled a horde of juvenile delinquents, and found his ex-partner Francis-7 on his trail with issue 2. *Logan's Run* #3 opened with the famed scene of Logan and Jessica in laser-battle against a villainous plastic surgeon and his receptionist (the Farrah character, which got this scene cover billing). There's a bit more action per page in issue 3, as Logan fights his way

out of the deathtrap and we view a pitched battle between Sandmen and Runners. But, basically, it's just your standard Marvel comic. There is a fairly impressive full-page portrait of Box, the ice-robot, for a finisher, though.

"Enter the Eternal Ice-World of Box!", believe it or not, is the title of #4. Box, who "scripts" animals, humans, and blades of grass by freezing them in ice, proves an engaging villain. (In fact, he's about the most enjoyable character in the entire opus with his echoes of Marvin the Paranoid Android and his frequent refrain, "I was only doing my job!") The two heroes make it free to a greener world outside the dome, on the outskirts of Washington, D.C. Francis-7 still pursues them with the air of an unpaid bill collector. There's a nice center-spread in this issue of Logan and Jessica facing a vine-covered Lincoln Memorial, and we do get to meet the Peter Ustinov character, a half-wacked out old fellow who keeps cats in the halls of Congress and quotes T.S. Eliot a lot. At the end, for a cliff-hanger, the chroniclers allow Francis-7 to grab Jessica and stuff a gun muzzle in her ear.

"End-Run" (#5) opens with a five-page fight which, with another inker, might dredge up memories of *Sons of the Tiger*. In the end, Logan bludgeons his rival with an American flag, cries for him, buries him, and then continues on with Jessica and the old fellow. George comes across with a nice montage shot of the wilderness they pass through, and an impressive view of the Wave Power Inlet where waters surge over stair-steps of stone and metal to create hydro-electric power. (This last feature *does* actually exist, by-the-bye, in Fort Worth, Texas, where the original scene was filmed—though under a different name and with a different purpose.)

Also included in *Logan's Run* #5 is a well-drawn scene of Logan interrogated in a chair by a torturing computer, which blows out like an overloaded fuse. Outside of that, it's straight-ahead comic workmanship as it had to be to get the story told. But Perez was putting out solid work for the undertaking. In almost the last panel, Logan sheds a tear

UP HERE, LOGAN!
FRANCIS! THEN--YOU'RE ALIVE!
BUT WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS? WE'RE EVEN NOW--DON'T YOU SEE? LET JESSICA GO, AT LEAST--THIS IS BETWEEN YOU AND I!

Scene-setting in the most space-efficient way.

for the past. He might have well been weeping for the loss of Perez, who departed with that issue.

Logan's Run sputtered on for two more issues after Perez's leave-taking. Apparently the sales weren't enough to warrant continuation of the book, just as the Nielsen returns didn't justify a long run for the TV show. *Logan's Run* #6 does sport an excellent Paul Gulacy cover, and plonks down a Thanos-vs.-The Destroyer back-feature by Scott Edelman and Mike Zeck. The art for the lead feature by Tom Sutton and Terry Austin ain't too shabby, either. But, one issue later, the book ended in mid-serial, with the announcement of another chapter which never appeared. (Another story which was obviously a reworked *Logan's Run* tale appeared years later in *Bizarre Adventures* #28, but it wasn't the promised issue 8.)

So what can one say about *Logan's Run* in its Marvel incarnation? Well, it was a B-movie; it became a B-comic book. But it wasn't a bad comic book. When you compare the first five issues of *Logan's* with the first six issues of Marvel's *Star Wars*, you come away with a better appreciation of Perez's workmanship in the matter.

That may be the reason why Perez enjoyed working on this series. He was restricted by the demands of a movie which over-shadowed everything in the comic, but, with the space he was given, he did a good job. So let it stand.

Lou Mougin is a prolific contributor to many fanzines, most recently **Amazing Heroes**.

AN EXERCISE IN RAW POWER

Not since Jack Kirby's legendary run of the **Fantastic Four** did the World's Greatest comic Book carry as much excitement as it did while George Perez held the artistic reins. Michael Mettler explains why.

When one speaks of the Fantastic Four, the adjective that leaps to mind is "power." Jack Kirby initiated the larger-than-life format, and consistently refined it for over 100 issues. After he left, a few other artists attempted to keep the FF at the pinnacle, but the flair and excitement that propelled the pioneering issues was missing.

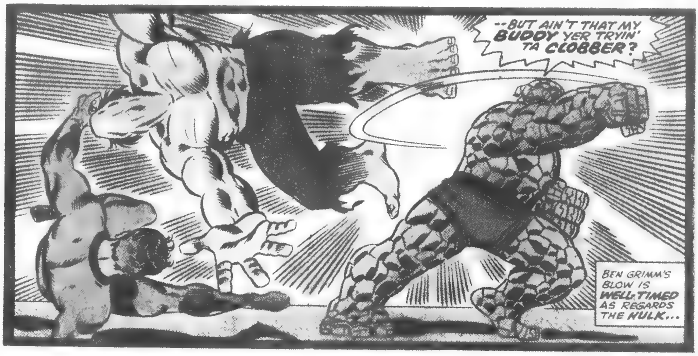
Then along comes this guy named George Perez

He was not on the book too terribly long; though his involvement with the book spanned five years, he only worked on 16 regular issues, two annuals, and 15 covers. But, to use a timeworn cliche, when George Perez was hot, he was *hot*.

Perez broke into the business under the wing of Rich Buckler, who was an artist on the *Fantastic Four* from 1973-75. It was only logical that Perez would follow his mentor on the book, and he stepped in as penciller on issue 164.

When George was able to use his own individual style, the forms of the characters began to take on new meaning. On the covers, there were usually four bubbles next to the logo, where the faces of each team member would appear. By issue 192, Perez's last issue, the Kirby-drawn faces had been replaced by Perez-drawn ones, explicit in detail and individuality. The reader could tell that Mr. Fantastic was the stern leader, the Invisible Girl effeminate but strong, the Human Torch had his intensifying heat power, and that the Thing was just one very tough hombre. On the interiors, body movement and rendering was better defined as Perez continued to draw the book. Reed had massive arms, and he dominated the panels he was in. His hair was tousled, with the graying at the temples becoming more and more visible. (As drawn by John Byrne, by comparison, he

Raw, undiluted power from **Fantastic Four** #167



Family portrait from Fantaco's **Fantastic Four Chronicles.**

"THE REST OF YOU HAVE THINGS TO DO!"
JOHNNY - FIRST WE NEED A HOLE BURNED IN THE SIDE OF THE PLANE.
JOHNNY'S BRIGHT LAD BROTHER-IN-LAW...SOME DOUGHNUT, MAN!
"SHAZAM! JUST PLAIN USELESS!"
GOOD WORK, JOHNNY! YOUR FLAMES HAVE ALMOST MELTED THROUGH THE METAL...
ARE YOU READY, SUE? THIS WILL BE A BIT CHILLY, CHROME-THANG...
I'M READY!
THEN--JOHNNY?
HERE WE GO!
THE NEXT MOMENT THE FINAL LINKS OF STEEL GIVE WAY--AND WITH JOHNNY'S HEAD STRICTLY-CONTROLLED, OPTICALLY-DIRECTED HEAT BLAST...
AND ALMOST INSTANTANEOUSLY, A HUMAN TORCH ROCKETS FROM THE PLUMMETTING FUSELAGE--
--WHILE A DESPERATELY-STRAINING MR. FANTASTIC ARCS FROM THE PLANE AS IT SHOT FROM SOME SILENT CANNON!
AS, INDEED--
WOTTA REVOLTIN' DEVELOPMENT THIS IS!
BEN--ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
I'VE GOT TO KEEP THE HOLE SEALED--WITH MY MENTAL FORCE FIELD...
OR ELSE WE'LL ALL BE SUCKED OUT THROUGH THE HOLE--LIKE WATER THROUGH A STRAW!
BUT THE STRAIN--IT'S ALMOST MORE THAN I CAN BEAR!
MY HEAD--FEELS LIKE IT'S ABOUT TO SPLIT! THE PRESSURE--
YOU CAN DO IT, SUE! CALL UPON YOU SOUL--YOU GOT IT?
AH, ME--ALL I CAN DO IS BE A LONG-TIME ROOTIN' SECTION!

Teamwork is a Perez trademark, as shown here in **Fantastic Four** #166.

has lost at least 50 pounds, and dominates his scenes usually by intellect alone rather than physical prowess.)

Sue's face had thinned out, and her cheekbones became more prominent. Her hips were very wide and her bust very noticeable. As a character, she began to be utilized more constructively and imaginatively, as a more integral part of the fighting team. Often she would be called upon to stretch her powers to their limits.

Perez's Johnny Storm was very cleancut and squarejawed. Like Reed, he was well-built, but has since toned down and seems to have lost about five years of age as well. When he flamed on, his head was more proportioned to that of someone's skull rather being than just a large head without hair. His flame moved at his every whim, as he too experimented with more dangerous and consuming ways to exercise his power.

Ben's middle name seems to have been Raw Power. Even with the grotesque face, Perez gave him a wide range of emotion. When he briefly lost his rocklike state, Ben Grimm remained bulky and broken-nosed with a hard-edged look.

The first stories Perez worked on came from the pen of Roy Thomas, who gave him some straightforward super-hero slam-bang scripts to delineate. The very first was a two-parter that dealt with the origin of the late Crusader/Marvel Boy, which was not too outstanding. Afterwards, in issue 166, things began to cook as the FF decided to head out to the Midwest. Reed was convinced that his psi-amplifier would permanently cure Dr. Bruce Banner of turning into the Hulk. The only problem was to be able to locate the brute. However, the Hulk found them first, by accidentally severing the wing of the plane they were on. With pandemonium erupting on board, Perez nicely choreographed a team effort on pages 10 and 11 to help the plane land safely. The trademark of teamwork would continue to appear in Perez's layouts during the myriad of fight scenes he had to draw.

Now free to their own purpose, the FF were able to confront the Hulk. A flame blast from Johnny weakened the behemoth to the point where Sue was able to cut off his air supply. The Hulk's dilemma was dramatically displayed in a close-up of his sweating face, also, in which the famed Perez jagged lines of electric tension added to the mood.

With the Hulk in custody, Reed could use his machinery, and with a degree of success. But the government had other plans for the Hulk—plans that the Thing objected to. Perez's powerful full-page shot of the Hulk and the Thing together ended the issue. Issue 167 picked up at that point, but it introduced another mainstay to Perez's *FF* stint—Joe Sinnott. Sinnott, the veteran *FF* inker, stayed on Perez's pencils throughout most of his run. He added a stable dimension to the dynamic layouts.

A classic battle raged during the majority of the book, with the monstrous pair against both the Army and the FF. Airplanes, chimneys, and army machinery fell victim to both the battle and Perez's pencils, with all sorts of objects flying in every direction.

When the Hulk tried to finish off Reed, the Thing struck back, and the two Titans clashed alone. At the peak of the struggle, a dizzy Thing

suddenly changed back into Ben Grimm. It was an ironic twist of fate, for the Hulk was the one who was supposed to have been cured.

Perez took a break for a few issues, then returned in issue 171, where Ben tested his new Thing-like exo-skeleton. Again, Sue showed that she was getting more resourceful, by being able to focus on two or more objects at the same time.

Johnny was at the zoo, explaining his problems to the then-mysterious Frankie Raye, when an alien ship passed by overhead. It crashed, and what else would emerge but a giant glowing golden gorilla that was growing by the minute? It proceeded to search out the Baxter Building and grab Sue. The other team members entered the fray, except for Johnny, who had been restrained by the pleadings of Ms. Raye. Yet he could not leave his sister at the mercy of the beast, and he had to leave behind a confused Frankie Raye.

Ultimately, Sue escaped on her own by using an expanding force-field bubble. Teamwork prevailed once more, as the gorilla began to shrink. When subdued, it began to talk—revealing that it had come 200 million miles to enlist the foursome's help against Galactus!

The ape, named Gorr, broke free at the outset of issue 172, leading the FF to his ship and subsequently capturing them. As Gorr explained his problem, Perez could let fly the flashbacks. Across a two-page spread on pages 16 and 17, he placed 10 panels around the face of Gorr, with the FF's profiles on opposite sides of the explanation. Gorr detailed the plans of the High Evolutionary, who had created a counter-Earth only to be discovered by Galactus's herald the Destroyer.

Ben was sent out to an asteroid where the Destroyer was waiting, so that the pair could engage in battle. The last two pages showcased the Destroyer's defeat, and across the bottom of pages 30 and 31, half-a-page high, the dramatic entry of the imposing, dwarfing figure of Galactus appeared. With such an introduction, it was a shame that Perez could not complete the saga, and instead returned four issues later

What an interesting return it was. After the Impossible Man had

THAT SUIT'S GEARED TO YOUR SPECIFICATIONS-- AND WOULDN'T WORK WITH ANYONE ELSE INSIDE.
NOW, HOW ABOUT TESTING YOUR NEWFOUND FISTS ON THIS?
WELL OKAY- I'LL GIVE 'ER A TRY--
BUT, S'HELP ME, IF I BUST MY MITT ON THIS HUNK'A CONCRETE--!
WHEEEE..OH!
IT'S JUST LIKE OLD TIMES!
THAP!

You could say it's clobbering time.

volunteered his planet for Galactus's consumption and Ben had turned back into the Thing permanently, the FF were returning to New York. However, the ship they were using was borrowed from the High Evolutionary, and it could not go any slower than the speed of light.

The Torch tried to slow its descent into Central Park by using heat updrafts. Sue entered the spotlight by enveloping the ship in a force-field and it bobbed to the surface of the pond.

From there, the FF tried to flag down a taxi amidst a crowded

The Marvel Bullpen, circa 1976: From left to right—Perez, Stan Lee, Roy Thomas, and Jack Kirby. Of the four, Lee is the only one who has not gone to DC Comics.

ANYWAY, STAN-- WE'VE BEEN TRYING TO REACH THE FANTASTIC FOUR ALL AFTERNOON!
I WAS OUT OF TOWN TOO, GEORGE
LECTURING, CONFERRING, CONFOUNDING THE FAITH AS IT WERE
WHEN I GOT THIS #@%&!!@%!! CALL FROM YOU AND JACK!
THEIR ANNOUNCING EQUIPMENT SHOULD THEY BE OUT OF TOWN.
IT IS AN EMERGENCY, JOLTIN' JOE SAMPOTT'S WAITING FOR PAGES RIGHT
AND HOW CAN WE DO OUR AUTHORIZED F.F. COMIC-MAG IF-EVERY TIME IT'S WRITTEN IT GETS TORN INTO?
*SEE F.F. #10-11. --RASCALLY.
HOW GOT ANY IDEAS, JACK? I KNOW YOU JUST GOT IN FROM THE COAST, BUT--
SHUSH! I'VE GOT AN IDEA--

WHILE'S NOW WILL YOU GIVE ME MY OWN COMIC-BOOK?
OR ARE MY EYE-BLASTS TOO SILLY FOR YOU, TOO?
WHOEVER WHERE STOMP DUG HOW UP'S IT?
JUNE? THOSE NEW FANTASTICARCARS JUST PUNISHER ALL THE TIME!

The Impossible Man wants his own funnybook in **Fantastic Four** #176. That's Big John Verpoorten in the foreground.

scene. Throughout the issue, Perez could detail daily New York—the *real* New York, with its hustle and bustle—and he pulled it off admirably. Impy decided to ride along as a pair of booties on the rear-view mirror. His shape-changing took the driver by surprise, and caused a crash. Out of the cab went the group, and a honking driver irritated Ben enough that he impeded his progress permanently—by tearing out the driver's engine

Meanwhile, Impy had floated off to Madison Avenue, where, at the time, Marvel Comics occupied the sixth floor. Inside, Perez, Roy Thomas, Stan Lee, and Jack Kirby, among others, were discussing the possibility of making up FF stories instead of "drawing what really happened" when Impy broke in, demanding his own comic book.

When told that he looked too silly, Impy went on a rampage, using such Marvel characters' equipment as Captain America's shield, Iron Man's repulsor ray, Cyclops's eye beam, and Thor's hammer.

A well-time sequence on page 22 had Marvel's late production manager John Verpoorten congratulating Kirby on his *2001* story pages, especially with the big sound effect "Blam!" At that exact instant, Impy had decided to blast through the doorway as Jack lamented, "Somehow I knew that was going to happen!"

Just then the FF arrived, with a solution: give Impy his own one-shot book and then he would go away. With that problem solved, another one immediately surfaced. Roger Stern handed Reed a classified ad that took him aback. The Frightful Four was soliciting applications for their fourth member—at the Baxter Building! Returning there post-haste, an impressive panel that took up three-quarters of a page showcased the existing three: the Wizard in the foreground, gloating with one eye closed and the other wide open; the Trapster, sneering with his paste-gun poised; and the Sandman, in costume and with a prepared block fist.

The fourth member was revealed in issue 177. His costume consisted of a white cowboy hat, handlebar moustache, and a blue uniform with a studded red front, searing a "T" on either side of his chest. His name was the Texas Twister. He possessed the power of creating tornadoes, and he almost contributed to the final downfall of the FF

Issue 178 introduced the Counter-Earth's Reed Richards, who had the power of turning into the purple-skinned, Hulk-like Brute. He was able to trap the other Reed in the Negative Zone so that he could take his place with Sue (Sue's Counter-Earth counterpart had passed away). In the middle of this saga, Perez took a six-month break until returning for a consecutive run on issues 184-88, probably his best and most consistent work. Len Wein had taken over the writing chores, giving Perez some intriguing scripts that eventually led to the break-up of the FF.

Issue 184 started with the aftermath of the Brute saga. Ben was left with cleaning up the mess left over from the battle, so on page 11 he came up with an odd solution. Gathering the machinery into a large pile, he ripped up a portion of the floor and swept everything under it.

Before this, it was revealed that Franklin Richards had been spirited away from the Baxter Building by his governess, Agatha Harkness, for an unknown reason. The crew got together and shuttled off to Whisper Hill, only to be intercepted by a tractor beam. On a two page spread, the Fantasticar fell apart and the FF literally "dropped in" in the house. This time they were intercepted by the Eliminator, a large red robot with a hideously

THIS ANAWER TUH BOTH THEM QUESTIONS, IE THIS SAME PARDNER.
FOLKS CALL ME--THE TEXAS TWISTER!
LEASTWAY, THEY WILL AS SOON AS THEY'VE HEARD OF ME.
JUST WANTED YUH SHOW YUH AIN'T YE GOT REAL SUPER-POWERS WHEN IF THAT OTHER HOMBRE DIDN'T?
RECKON AH MADE MUH POINT.

The Texas Twister, from **Fantastic Four** #177.

masked face. His duty was to ensure that any trace of Agatha Harkness not be left among "your primitive race." When the Eliminator thought he had killed the four, he prepared to self-destruct. However, Sue had fooled him by enclosing the group in a force field.

Next issue began back at the Baxter Building, where Reed showed off his new auto-extensors that he was forced to use since he had lost his stretching powers during the Brute/Negative Zone battle. A brief humorous sequence involved Impy, who wanted to show off his purple-and-green gangster outfit he had seen during the *St. Valentine's Day Massacre*. Nobody was home, so the shapechanger sat down to "continue my studies of this curious planet Earth"—by watching more television.

Meanwhile, the FF were off to a secluded mountain area in the Colorado Rockies, where they believed the Eliminator had originated. Surprisingly, a small town named New Salem was located there. To avoid looking suspicious, the group had to don plain, civilian clothes and drove into town. Strangely, the town had no other cars.

After being convinced the town was innocent, they decided to leave. Suddenly the road out of town was blocked by a wall of flame. The town then revealed that it was made up of witches, following their black-bearded, evil leader, Nicholas Scratch. A battle erupted between the FF and some gargoyles that were activiated by Scratch's Satan-Staff. The witches themselves joined hands and their eyes began to glow, psychically defeating the FF. On page 30, the scenes of the FF's defeat were transposed between identical panels of Scratch holding up the staff with his eyes glowing.

If this wasn't enough, the following issue introduced the Salem Seven, which was seven of the townspeople endowed with different abilities. The powers were nothing new to the comics world, but their costuming was quite colorful. They did give the FF one of its toughest battles. During the story it was learned that Scratch was Agatha Harkness's son, and he needed to utilize Franklin's mutant

HMM-THINK I HORE LIKE IT. I HATED TO LEAVE BEN IN THE KLAWON BACK THERE BUT I JUST HAD TO GET AWAY FOR A WHILE--
--GIVE MYSELF A CHANCE TO SORT THINGS OUT!
SO MUCH HAS BEEN HAPPENING LATELY, THERE'S SO MUCH I HAVE TO DECIDE
AND FIGHTING THE THOUGHT OF THE VIVISCOPE ROMANTIC DRIVE ALL THE TIME ISN'T EXACTLY HELPING MATTERS MUCH

Perez resurfaces in **Fantastic Four** #184, once again displaying his mastery of detail and perspective

ability. Agatha disowned him and he was vanquished, with her mourning the fact that he was evil rather than loving.

Returning to the Baxter Building at the beginning of issue 187, they found Impy unconscious with his head through the color TV. Somebody had infiltrated the defense system, and it turned out to be the villainous Klaw, as Ben discovered. He was rewarded by being turned into solid glass by the new Molecule Man, who had teamed up with Klaw. One by one they picked off each member of the FF. Thinking themselves victorious, the duo was surprised to find themselves attacked—but this time by the Impossible Man.

Impy took care of Klaw by meeting sound with sound. Reed

Supernatural Perez creations from **Fantastic Four** #186—Salem's Seven

THEY AIN'T EVEN HUMAN ANYMORE!
NO, BENJAMIN GRIMM--INSTEAD HE HAVE BECOME A SUPERNATURAL SQUADRON, CREATED SOLELY TO DEFY YOUR OWN INHUMAN PUNKERS!
YOU MAY CALL US SALEM'S SEVEN!!

TOO LATE, HUMAN! I CAUGHT YOUR FOOLISH HUSBAND SHIP-SHAPE! NOTHING COULD MUSTER ANY SORT OF OPPOSITION AGAINST MY AWESOME POWERS!!
AH, BUT I'VE INTERCEPTED AND I DOUBLE AMPLIFIED HIS PSIONIC ENERGIES! I'M STRONGER THAN EVER!
...THE MOLECULE MAN REIGNS SUPREME!!

Perez makes a static pose appear intense, from **Fantastic Four** #187.

was able to recover and reverse the effects on the Molecule Man with his psi-amplifier. Unfortunately, he made the mistake of picking up the metal wand, transforming himself into the Molecule Man in a full page panel at the end of the issue.

A super battle raged in issue 188, with Reed's consciousness fighting for control of his body. Ominously, a 20-foot tall silent man had decided to come and observe instead of take part in the struggle; he was the Watcher, of course.

Meanwhile, the Molecule Man had transformed a skyscraper into a living being on page 11. A head reared back and smoke poured out of a makeshift mouth as two arms crushed nearby buildings. Rife with typical Perez detail, windows and rooms ran up and down the body, with people still inside. The havoc ceased when Richards decided to temporarily relent his battle to regain control of his body. Instantly, the building was "de-animated"—and it sat, silent and smoking, in the middle of a street on page 15.

The remaining FF refused to give up. After many pages of destruction, the mental battle heightened to an intense struggle, wherein Reed's body was transformed into pure molecules. Finally, the wand dropped into a furnace's smokestack and was obliterated. Reed had won.

The tattered crew regrouped at the Baxter Building, with the Watcher again present. Reed had decided that he was more of a crutch than a help to the team, and he resigned his post as leader of the FF. Sue decided to stand by him, with Ben and Johnny leaving with heads bowed. Perez's camera eye pulled back on the Watcher amidst rubble in three panels, signifying the end of an era in the book

Two fill-ins followed until "Four No More" could be published. The FF were packing up and moving out, and George had a chance to draw some character scenes, which had been missing in the previous helter-skelter issues. The group said their personal goodbyes, with Reed staying behind to watch the loading of the equipment—which was being loaded by the Plunderer! The four came together to beat him, yet nothing had changed. The group was still split and the final solemn panel captured it well: Each team member behind the door where hung the sign, "Now Renting Top 5 Floors of Baxter Building Formerly Owned by the Fantastic Four." A symbolic issue in many ways, for it stood as an ending to Perez's regular *FF* work. He did stay on for next issue's Johnny Storm solo story, a few more covers, and two annuals (one with his future *Teen Titans* collaborator, Marv Wolfman), but he left in early 1978 to go on to other projects.

Fan reaction to Perez was highly favorable. Enthusiasm for the artwork was likened to Kirby, and some even felt new dynamics were being applied to the book. A lot of work showed through in just about every page, for there were often many characters to be fit into each individual scene. He had competent super-hero scripts to work with, which included heavy emphasis on the action rather than on the characterization. Often times he would fit seven to nine panels to a page, always packed with moving figures, different angles, and always plenty of patented Perez rubble for good measure.

It is generally conceded that Perez has done his best work on the group books, and the FF stood as a testing ground for his future efforts with other teams. Perez's stint on the FF could be summed up as an exercise in power. He left a mark on the world's greatest comic magazine. In the '70s, that "greatest" applied to Perez's powerful work.

Michael K. Mettler is the current head of the apa **Titan Talk**

CHECKLIST

MARVEL COMICS

Astonishing Tales
#25, Aug. '74
No Title
Writer: Doug Moench
Artist: Perez
Inker: Mike Esposito
2 pp

Avengers
#141, Nov. '75
The Phantom Empire 1"
Writer: Steve Englehart
Artist: Perez
Inker: Vince Colletta
18 pp

142, Dec. '75
Go West Young Gods!"
Writer: Steve Englehart
Artist: Perez
Inker: Vince Colletta
18 pp

#143, Jan. '76
Right Between the Eons"
Writer: Steve Englehart
Artist: Perez
Inker: Sam Grainger
18 pp

#143, Jan. '76
Claws!"
Writer: Steve Englehart
Artist: Perez
Inker: Mike Esposito
17 pp.

#147, May, '76
Crisis On Other Earth"
Writer: Steve Englehart
Artist: Perez
Inker: Vince Colletta
17 pp

#148
'20,000 Leagues Under Justice"
Writer: Steve Englehart
Artist: Perez
Inker: Sam Grainger
17 pp

#149, July, '76
'The Gods and the Gang!"
Writer: Steve Englehart
Artist: Perez
Inker: Sam Grainger
Cover: Perez/Frank Giacoia
17 pp

#150, Aug '76
'Avengers Assemble"
Writer: Steve Englehart
Artist: Perez
Inkers: John Tartaglione/Duffy Vohland
Cover: Perez/Dan Adkins
6 pp

#151, Sept., '76

50¢ 281 NOV.
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES!
THE AVENGERS
IT CAME BACK... AVENGERS HQ — DESTROYED BY THE SAURIAN TAKES OVER!

"At Last The Decision"
Writers: Gerry Conway/Jim Shooter/Steve Englehart
Artist: Perez
Inker: John Tartaglione
17 pp.

#154, Dec. '76
"When Strikes Attuma?"
Writer: Gerry Conway
Artist: Perez
Inker: Pablo Marcos
17 pp

#160, June '77
" The Trial!"
Writer: Jim Shooter
Artist: Perez
Inker: Pablo Marcos
Cover: Perez/Joe Sinnott
17 pp

#161, Jul. '77
"Beware the Ant Man!"
Writer: Jim Shooter
Artist: Perez
Inker: Pablo Marcos
Cover: Perez/Marcos
17 pp

#162, Aug. '77
"The Bride of Ultron!"
Writer: Jim Shooter
Artist: Perez
Inker: Pablo Marcos
Cover: Perez/Joe Sinnott
16 pp

#163, Sept. '77
Cover: Perez, Marcos

#164, Oct. '77
Cover: Perez/John Tartaglione

#165, Nov. '77
Cover: Perez/Pablo Marcos

#166, Dec. '77
Cover: Perez/Ernie Chua

#167, Jan. '78
"Tomorrow Dies Today!"
Writer: Jim Shooter
Artist: Perez
Inker: Pablo Marcos
Cover: Perez, Terry Austin
17 pp.

#168, Feb. '78
"First Blood"
Writer: Jim Shooter
Artist: Perez
Inker: Pablo Marcos
Cover: Perez/Austin
17 pp.

#170, Apr ' 78
"Though Hell Should Bar the Way"
Writer: Jim Shooter
Artist: Perez
Inker: Pablo Marcos
Cover: Perez/Austin
17 pp.

#171, May '78
" . . Where Angels Fear To Tread"
Writer: Jim Shooter
Artist: Perez
Inker: Pablo Marcos
Cover: Perez/Austin
17 pp.

#172, Jun. '78
Cover: Perez/Austin

#173, July '78
Cover: Perez/Austin

#174, Aug. '78
Cover: Perez/Austin

#181, Mar. '79
Cover: Perez/Austin

#183, May '79
Cover: Perez/Austin

#184, Jun '79
Cover: Perez/Austin

#191, Jan. '80
Cover: Perez/Sal Buscema

#192, Feb. '80
Cover: Perez/Joe Sinnott

#194, April '80
"Interlude"
Writer: David Michelne
Artist: Perez
Inker: Josef Rubenstein
Cover: Perez/Josef Rubenstein
17 pp.

#195, May '80
"Assault on a Mind Cage"
Writer: David Micheline
Artist: Perez
Inker: Jack Abel/Dan Green
Cover: Perez/Dan Green
17 pp

#196, Jun '80
"The Terrible Toll of the Taskmaster"
Writer: David Micheline
Artist: Perez
Inker: Jack Abel
Cover: Perez/Joe Rubinstein
17 pp

#197, Jul '80
Cover: Perez/Bob McLeod
Splash Page: Perez

#198, Aug '80
"Better Red than Ronin!"
Writer: David Micheline
Artist: Perez
Inker: Dan Green
Cover: Perez/Austin
18 pp

#199, Sept '80
"Last Stand on Long Island"
Writer: David Micheline
Artist: Perez
Inker: Dan Green
Cover: Perez/Austin
18 pp

#200, Oct '80
Writer: David Micheline
Artist: Perez
Inker: Dan Green
Cover: Perez/Austin
35 pp

#201, Nov '80
"The Evil Reborn"
Writer: David Micheline
Artist: Perez
Inker: Dan Green
Cover: Perez/Austin
13 pp.
"Bully!"
Writer: David Micheline
Artist: Perez
Inker: Gene Day
8 pp.

#202, Dec '80
"This Evil Undying"
Writer: David Micheline
Artist: Perez
Inker: Mike Esposito
22 pp

Avengers Annual
#6, 1976
"No Final Victory"
Writer, Gerry Conway
Artist: Perez
Inkers: Mike Esposito, John Tartaglione, Duffy Vohland
27pp

#8, 1978
"Spectrums of Deceit"
Writer: Roger Slifer
Artist: Perez
Inkers: Pablo Marcos, Ric Villamonte
34pp.

Captain America
#243, Mar. '80
Cover: Perez/Joe Sinnott

#246, Jun. '80
Cover: Perez/Terry Austin

Creatures on the Loose
#33, Jan '75
"Deathgame"
Writer, David A. Kraft
Artist: Perez
Inker: Klaus Janson
15pp

#34, Mar '75
"Nightflight"
Writer: David A Kraft
Artist: Perez
Inker: Frank McLaughlin
Cover: Perez/John Romita/Tony Mortellaro
19pp

#35, May '75
"Wolfquest"
Writer: David A. Kraft
Artist: Perez
Inker: Frank McLaughlin
18pp

#36, Jul '75
"Weird Stone"
Writer: David A. Kraft
Artist: Perez
Inker: Frank McLaughlin
18pp

#37, Sept '75
"Moonbound"
Writer: David A. Kraft
Artist: Perez
Inker: Fred Kida
18pp

Defenders
#51, Sept '77
Cover: Perez/Pablo Marcos

#53, Nov. '77
Cover: Perez/Bob Wiacek #54, Dec '77
Cover, Perez/Ernie Chua

#64, Oct '78
Cover: Perez/Frank Giacoia

Fantastic Four
#164, Nov. '75
"The Crusader Syndrome"
Writer: Roy Thomas
Artist: Perez
Inker, Joe Sinnott
18pp.

#165, Dec. '75
"The Light of Other Worlds!"
Writer: Roy Thomas
Artist: Perez
Inker, Joe Sinnott
Cover: Perez/Joe Sinnott
18pp.

#166, Jan '76
"If It's Tuesday This Must Be the Hulk!"
Writer, Roy Thomas
Artist: Perez
Inker: Vince Colletta
17pp.

#167, Feb '76
"Titans Two"
Writer: Roy Thomas
Artist: Perez
Inker: Joe Sinnott
17pp.

#170, May '76
"A Sky-Full of Fear!"
Writer: Roy Thomas
Artist, Perez
Inker: Joe Sinnott
Cover, Perez/Sinnott
17pp

#171, Jun. '76
"Death Is A Golden Gorilla"
Writer, Roy Thomas
Artist: Perez

Inker Joe Sinnott
14pp

#172, Jul. '76
Cry, The Bedeviled Planet"
Writers Roy Thomas/Bill Mantlo
Artist Perez
Inker Joe Sinnott
17pp

#176, Nov. '76
The Impossible Man Is Back In Town"
Writer Roy Thomas
Artist Perez
Inker Joe Sinnott
17pp

#177, Dec. '76
Look Out for the Frightful Four!"
Writer: Roy Thomas
Artist Perez
Inker: Joe Sinnott
17pp

#178, Jan '77
Call My Killer Brute"
Writer: Roy Thomas
Artist Perez
Inker Dave Hunt
17pp

#183, Jun '77
Cover: Perez/Joe Sinnott

#184, Jul '77
Aftermath The Eliminator"
Writer: Len Wein
Artist Perez
Inker Joe Sinnott
Cover Perez/Joe Sinnott
18pp

#185, Aug. '77
Here There Be Witches!"
Writer Len Wein
Artist Perez
Inker Joe Sinnott
Cover Perez/Joe Sinnott
17pp

#186, Sept. '77
"Enter, Salem's Seven"
Writer: Len Wein
Artist. Perez
Inker. Joe Sinnott
Cover: Perez/Joe Sinnott
17pp.

#187, Oct '77
"Trouble Times Two"
Writer: Len Wein
Artist. Perez
Inker. Joe Sinnott
Cover Perez/Dave Cockrum
17pp.

#188, Nov '77
"The Rampage of Reed Richards"
Writer: Len Wein
Artist: Perez
Inker. Joe Sinnott
Cover: Perez/Joe Sinnott
18pp

#191, Feb '78
"Four No More"
Writer: Len Wein
Artist. Perez
Inker: Joe Sinnott
Cover. Perez/Joe Sinnott
17pp

#192, Mar '78
"He Who Soweth the Wind"
Writer: Roger Slifer
Artist: Perez
Inker: Joe Sinnott
Cover. Perez/Frank Giacoia
17pp

#194, May '78
Cover. Perez

#195, Jun. '78
Cover Perez

#196, Jul '78
Cover Perez

#197, Aug. '78
Cover Perez

#205, Apr. '79
Cover: Perez/Joe Sinnott

Fantastic Four Annual
#14, 1979
"Cat's Paw!"
Writer: Marv Wolfman
Artist Perez
Inker: Pablo Marcos
29pp.

#15, 1980
"Time for the Prime Ten"
Writer. Doug Moench
Artist. Perez
Inker: Chic Stone/D'agostino/Mike Esposito
Cover: Perez/Toe
24pp

Ghost Rider
#26, Oct. '77
Cover: Perez/Rudy Nebres

Inhumans
#1, Oct. '75

"Spawn of Allen Heat"
Writer: Doug Moench
Artist Perez
Inker: Frank Chiarmonte
19pp

#2, Dec '75
"Star-Slaves"
Writer: Doug Moench
Artist. Perez
Inker Fred Kida
19pp

#3, Feb '76
"Panic In New York"
Writer. Doug Moench
Artist Perez
Inker Mike Esposito
17pp

#4, Apr '76
"The Doom Called Shatterstar"
Writer. Doug Moench
Artist Perez
Inker: Vince Colletta

#8, Dec '76
"Star-Search: Dust and Demons"
Writer: Doug Moench
Artist Perez
Inker: Don Perlin
17pp

Iron Man
#102, Sept '77
Cover Perez/Pablo Marcos

#103, Oct. '77
Cover. Perez/Mike Esposito

John Carter, Warlord of Mars
#12, May '78
Artist Perez/Rudy Nebres

#13, Jun. '78
Cover Perez/Rudy Nebres

#14, Jul '78
Cover Perez/Rudy Nebres

#15, Aug '78
Cover: Perez/Rudy Nebres

#16, Sept '78
Cover, Perez/Rudy Nebres

#18, Nov '78
Cover Perez/Rudy Nebres

#24, May '79
Cover: Perez/Terry Austin

Logan's Run
#1, Jan '77
"Part One"
Writer: Gerry Conway
Artist: Perez
Inker Klaus Janson
Cover, Perez/Al Milgrom
17pp

#2, Feb '77
"Cathedral Kill"
Writer: David A Kraft
Artist Perez
Inker Klaus Janson
Cover Perez/Tom Palmer
17pp

#4, Apr '77
"Ice-World of Box"
Writer David A Kraft
Artist, Perez
Inker Klaus Janson
Cover Perez/Klaus Janson
16pp

#5, May '77
"End Run"
Writer David A Kraft
Artist Perez
Inker Klaus Janson
Cover Perez/Frank Giacoia
17pp

Marvel Fanfare
#10, Aug '83
"Widow"
Writer: Ralph Macchio
Artist Perez
Inker Brett Breeding
Cover Perez
9pp

#11, Nov '83
"Back in the U S.S.R"
Writer Ralph Macchio
Artist Perez
Inker, Joe Sinnott/Jack Abel
Cover Perez/Layton
17pp

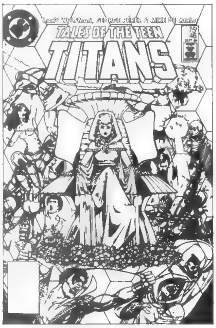
#12, Jan '84
"The Web Tightens"
Writer Ralph Macchio
Artist Perez
Inker Al Milgrom
Cover Perez
17pp

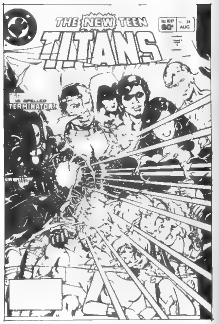
#13, Mar '84
"The Widow Alone"
Writer, Ralph Macchio
Artist Perez
Inkers: Brett Breeding/John Beatty
18pp

Marvel Premiere
#45 Dec '78
"Otherwar"
Writer David A Kraft
Artist Perez
Inker Frank Giacoia
Cover, Perez/Frank Giacoia
17pp

#46, Feb '79
"Stargod"
Writer, David A Kraft
Artist Perez
Inker Ric Villamonte
Cover Perez/Terry Austin
17pp

Marvel Team-Up
#65, Jan '78
Cover Perez/Mike Esposito





Marvel Two-In-One
#32, Oct. '77
Cover Perez/Pablo Marcos

#33, Nov '77
Cover: Perez/Joe Sinnott

#42, Aug '78
Cover Perez/Austin

#50, Apr '79
Cover Perez/Joe Sinnott

#51, May '79
Cover: Perez/Joe Sinnott

#52, June '79
Cover, Perez/Joe Sinnott

#54, Aug '79
Cover, Perez/Terry Austin

#56, Oct '79
"The Deadlier of the Species"
Writer: Mark Gruenwald/Ralph Macchio
Artist Perez
Inker: Gene Day
17pp

#57, Nov '79
"When Walks Wundarr"
Writer: Mark Gruenwald Ralph Macchio
Artist. Perez
Inker Gene Day
Cover Perez/Al Milgrom
18pp

#58, Dec '79
"To the Nth Power"
Writer Mark Gruenwald/Ralph Macchio
Artist Perez
Inker. Gene Day
Cover: Perez/Terry Austin
18pp

#60, Feb '80
"Happiness Is a Warm Alien"
Writer: Mark Gruenwald/Ralph Macchio
Artist Perez

Inker: Gene Day
17pp.

#61, Mar '80
Cover: Perez/Terry Austin

#64, Jun '80
From the Depths"
Writer: Mark Gruenwald/Ralph Macchio
Artist: Perez
Inker: Gene Day
Cover: Perez/Gene Day
18pp

#65, Jul, '80
"Serpents from the Sea"
Writer: Mark Gruenwald/Ralph Macchio
Artist: Perez
Inker: Gene Day
Cover: Perez/Gene Day
18pp

#66, Aug '80
Cover: Perez/Terry Austin

Marvel Universe
#13, Feb. '84
Man-Wolf by Perez, one page illo

Monsters Unleashed
#8, Oct '74
Plot: Tony Isabella
Script: Doug Moench
Artist: Perez
Inker: Duffy Vohland/Rich Buckler
14pp

Ms. Marvel
#23, Apr '79
Cover: Perez/Bob Wiacek

Nova
#14, Oct '77
Cover: Perez/Joe Sinnott

Peter Parker
#9, Aug. '77
Cover: Perez/Al Milgrom

#10, Sept. '77
Cover: Perez/Frank Giacoia

Planet of the Apes (British Weekly) #10
Cover: Perez

Power Man
#27, Oct. '75
"Just a Guy Named X"
Writer: Bill Mantlo
Artist: Perez
Inker: Al McWilliams
18pp.

X-Men
#112, Aug. '78
Cover: Perez/Bob Layton

#128, Dec '79
Cover: Perez/Terry Austin

X-Men Annual
#3, 1979
"A Fire in the Sky"
Writer: Chris Claremont
Artist: Perez
Inker: Terry Austin (pg. 31 by John Byrne)
35pp

What If?
#15, July '79
Writer: Marv Wolfman
Artist: Perez
Inker: Tom Palmer
7pp

DC COMICS

Action Comics
#529, Mar '82
Cover: Perez/Dick Giordano

#544, Jun '83
The New Luthor designed by Perez -One page illustration

#563, Jan '85
Single panel shot of Bethany Snow by Perez

Adventure Comics
#484, Aug. 81
Cover: Perez

#485, Sept '81
Cover: Perez

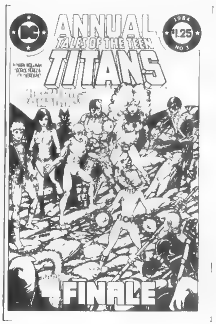
#486 Oct '81
Cover: Perez

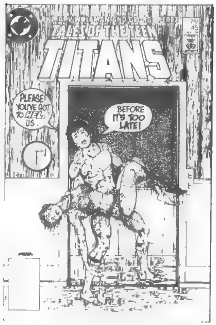
#490, Feb '82
Cover: Perez/Smith

All Star Squadron Annual
#3, 1984
"The Hourman"
Writer: Roy Thomas
Artist: Perez
Inker: Jerry Ordway
3pp

Amethyst, Princess of Gemworld
#4, Aug. '83
Cover: Colon, Perez

#5, Sept '83
Cover: Perez/Colon





#6, Oct '83
Cover: Perez/Colon

#7, Nov '83
Cover: Perez/Colon

#8, Dec '83
Cover: Perez/Colon

#9, Jan '84
Cover: Perez/Colon

#10, Feb '84
Cover: Perez/Colon

#11 Mar '84
Cover: Perez/Colon

Batman and the Outsiders
#5, Dec '83
Cover: Perez/Jim Aparo

Batman vs. the Hulk
(1982)
Inside front cover, inks

Best of DC Digest
#17, Oct '81
Cover: Perez/Dick Giordano
Supergirl

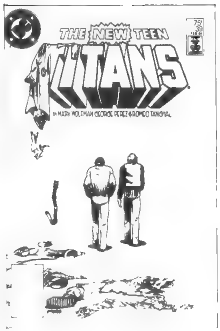
#18, Nov '81
Cover: Perez/Romeo Tanghal
The Teen Titans

#21 Feb '82
Cover: Perez
The Justice Society of America

#22, Mar '82
Back cover: Perez
Christmas issue

#23, Apr '82
Reprints Titans #8 cover: Perez/Dick Giordano
"Year's Best Comic Stories"

#24 May '82



"Meet the Legion"
Artist: Perez
16pp

#35, Apr '83
Reprints Titans #20, also the cover to Titans #16

#50, July '84
Reprints DC Comics Presents #61

Crisis On Infinite Earths
#1, Apr '85
"The Summoning"
Writer: Marv Wolfman
Artist: Perez
Inker: Dick Giordano
Cover: Perez
Inside back cover: Perez
32pp

#2, May '85
"Time and Time Again"
Writer: Marv Wolfman
Artist: Perez
Inker: Dick Giordano
Cover: Perez
25pp

#3, Jun '85
"Oblivion Upon Us"
Writer: Marv Wolfman
Artist: Perez
Inker: Dick Giordano/Mike DeCarlo
Cover: Perez
25pp

#4, Jul '85
"Death of the Monitor"
Writer: Marv Wolfman
Artist: Perez
Inker: Mike DeCarlo
Cover: Perez
Inside back cover: Perez

#5, Aug '85
"Worlds In Limbo"
Writer: Marv Wolfman
Artist: Perez
Inker: Jerry Ordway
Cover: Perez
25pp

#6, Sept '85
"3 Earths, 3 Deaths"
Writer: Marv Wolfman
Artist: Perez
Inker: Jerry Ordway
Cover: Perez
25pp

D.C. Comics Presents
#26, Oct '80
"Where Nightmares Begin"
Writer: Marv Wolfman
Artist: Perez
Inker: Dick Giordano
16pp

#38, Oct '81
Cover: Perez
2-page illo. of first 36 guest stars

#61, Sept '83
"The Once and Future War"
Writer: Len Wein
Artist: Perez
Inker: Pablo Marcos
Cover: Perez
24pp

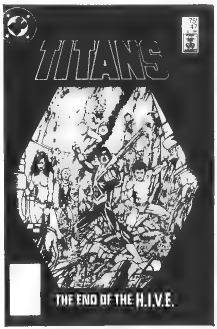
DC Sampler
#1, 1983
2-page illo. of Titans

#2, 1984
2-page illo. of Titans

#3, 1984
2-page illo. of "Crisis on Infinite Earths"

DC Special Digest
#19, Mar '81
Cover: Perez/Frank Giacoia
The Doom Patrol

Elson's Presents DC Super Heroes
#3, 1980
Reprints Titans #3



Flash
#289, Sept '80
"Firestorm Is Back In Town"
Writer: Gerry Conway
Artist: Perez
Inker: Romeo Tanghal
8pp

#290, Oct '80
"The Secret History of the Nuclear Man"
Writer: Gerry Conway
Artist: Perez
Inker: Bob Smith
8pp

#291, Nov '80
"The Hyena Laughs Last"
Writer: Gerry Conway
Artist: Perez
Inker: Rodin Rodriguez
Cover: Perez
8pp

#292, Dec '80
"The Hostages of Precinct 13"
Writer: Gerry Conway
Artist: Perez
Inker: Bob Smith
8pp

#293, Jan '81
"The Deadliest Man Alive"
Writer: Gerry Conway
Artist: Perez
Inker: Rodin Rodriguez
Cover: Perez
13pp

Green Lantern
#132, Sept '80
Cover: Perez, Dick Giordano

#141, June '81
Cover: Perez

#142, Jul '81
Cover: Perez

#143, Aug '81

Cover Perez

#144, Sept '81
Cover: Perez

Justice League of America
#184, Nov '80
Apokolips Now"
Writer Gerry Conway
Artist Perez
Inker: Frank McLaughlin
Cover: Perez/Dick Giordano
25pp

#185, Dec '80
Darkseid Rising"
Writer: Gerry Conway
Artist Perez
Inker Frank McLaughlin
25pp

#186, Jan '81
Who Can Stop The Shaggy Man"
Writer, Gerry Conway
Artist Perez
Inker: Frank McLaughlin
Cover: Perez
25pp

#192, Jul '81
Quest For Genesis"
Writer Gerry Conway
Artist Perez
Inker Jonh Beatty
Cover, Perez
25pp

#193, Aug '81
"Secret of Genesis"
Writer: Gerry Conway
Artist, Perez
Inker: John Beatty
Cover Perez
23pp

#194, Sept '81
'Destiny is a Stacked Deck"
Writer Gerry Conway
Artist Perez

Inker John Beatty
Cover, Perez
25pp

#195, Oct '81
"Target on Two Worlds"
Writer: Gerry Conway
Artist Perez
Inker John Beatty
Cover, Perez
25pp
2 page illo of the JLA/JSA by Perez

#196, Nov '81
"Countdown to Crisis"
Writer: Gerry Conway
Artist Perez
Inker Romeo Tanghal
Cover Perez/Dick Giordano
25pp

#197, Dec '81
"Crisis in Limbo"
Writer: Gerry Conway
Artist Perez
Inker Romeo Tanghal
Cover, Perez/Mike DeCarlo
8pp

#199, Feb '82
Cover: Perez

#200, Mar '82
"A League Divided"
Writer Gerry Conway
Artist, Perez
Inker Brett Breeding
Covers Perez
37pp

#201, Apr '82
Cover: Perez/Dick Giordano

#202, May '82
Cover: Perez

#203, Jun '82
Cover Perez/Dick Giordano

#204, Jul '82
Cover Perez/Dick Giordano

#205, Aug '82
Cover Perez/Mike DeCarlo

#207, Oct '82
Cover, Perez

#208, Nov '82
Cover: Perez

#209, Dec '82
Cover Perez

#212, Mar '83
Cover Perez

#213, Apr '83
Cover, Perez

#214, May '83
Cover Perez

#215, Jun '83
Cover: Perez

#217, Aug '83
Cover Perez

#218, Sept '83
Cover: Perez

#219, Oct '83
Cover Perez

#220, Nov '83
Cover: Perez

Legion of Superheroes

#268, Oct '80
Cover: Perez/Terry Austin

#277, Jul '81
Cover: Perez

#278, Aug '81
Cover Perez

#279, Sept '81
Cover: Perez

#280, Oct '81
Cover Perez

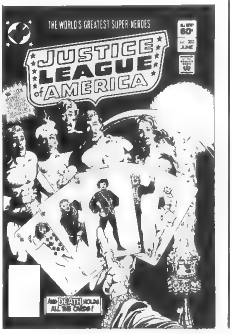
#281, Nov '81
Cover Perez/Bruce Patterson

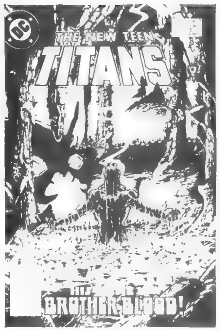
#300, Jun '83
Cover Perez
(Colossal Boy only)

New Teen Titans

#1, Nov '80
"The New Teen Titans"
Writer Marv Wolfman
Artist Perez
Inker: Romeo Tanghal
Cover Perez/Dick Giordano
25pp

#2, Dec '80
"Today The Terminator"
Writer Marv Wolfman
Artist Perez





Inker Romeo Tangha.
Cover Perez
25pp

#3, Jan '81
"The Fearsome Five"
Writer Marv Wolfman
Artist Perez
Inker Frank Chiarmonte
Cover Perez
25pp

#4, Feb '81
"Against All Friends"
Writer Marv Wolfman
Artist Perez
Inker Romeo Tanghal
Cover Perez
25pp

#5, Mar '81
Cover Perez

#6, Apr '81
"Last Kill"
Writer Marv Wolfman
Artist Perez
Inker Pablo Marcos
Cover Perez

#7, May '81
"Assault on Titans Tower"-
Writer Marv Wolfman
Artist Perez
Inker Romeo Tanghal
Cover Perez
25pp

#8, Jun '81
"A Day in the Lives
Writer Marv Wolfman
Artist Perez
Inker Romeo Tanghal
Cover Perez
25pp

#9, Jul '81
"Like Puppets on a String"
Writer Marv Wolfman
Artist Perez
Inker Romeo Tanghal
Cover Perez
25pp

#10 Aug '81
"Promethium Unbound"
Writer Marv Wolfman
Artist Perez
Inker Romeo Tanghal
Cover Perez
25pp

#11, Sept '81
"When Titans Clash"
Writer Marv Wolfman
Artist Perez
Inker Romeo Tanghal
Cover Perez
25pp

#12, Oct '81
"Clash of the Titans"
Writer Marv Wolfman
Artist Perez
Inker Romeo Tanghal
Cover Perez
25pp

#13 Nov '81
"Friends and Foes Alike"
Writer Marv Wolfman
Artist Perez
Inker Romeo Tanghal
Cover Perez/Tanghal
25pp

#14 Dec '81
"Revolution"
Writer Marv Wolfman
Artist Perez
Inker Romeo Tangha.
Cover Perez Dick Giordano
25pp

#15, Jan '82
"The Brotherhood of Evil Lives Again"
Writer Marv Wolfman
Artist Perez
Inker Romeo Tanghal
Cover Perez Tanghal
25pp

#16 Feb '82
"Starfire Unleashed"
Writer Marv Wolfman
Artist Perez
Inker Romeo Tanghal
Cover Perez Tanghal
25pp

#17, Mar '82
"The Possessing of Francis Kane"
Writer Marv Wolfman
Artist Perez
Inker Romeo Tanghal
Cover Perez Tanghal
25pp

#18 Apr '82
"A Pretty Girl is Like a Maladi"
Writer Marv Wolfman
Artist Perez
Inker Romeo Tanghal
Cover Perez
25pp

#19 May '82
"The Light Fantastic"
Writer Marv Wolfman
Artist Perez
Inker Romeo Tanghal
Cover Perez
25pp

#20, Jun '82
"Dear Mom and Dad"
20pp
"A Titanic Tale of Titans Tomfoolery"
5pp
Writer Marv Wolfman
Artist Perez
Inker Romeo Tanghal
Cover Perez

#21, Jul '82
"Beware the Wrath of Brother Blood!"
Writer Marv Wolfman
Artist Perez
Inker Romeo Tanghal
Cover Perez
25pp

#22, Aug '82
"Ashes to Ashes"
Writer Marv Wolfman
Artist Perez
Inker Romeo Tanghal
Cover Perez
25pp

#23, Sept '82
"Kidnapped"
Writer Marv Wolfman
Artist Perez
Inker Romeo Tanghal
Cover Perez
25pp

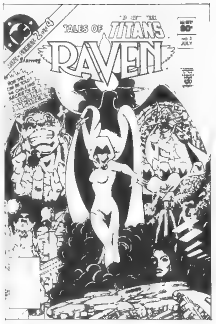
#24, Oct '82
"Citadel Strike"
Writer Marv Wolfman
Artist Perez
Inker Romeo Tanghal
Cover Perez
25pp

#25, Nov '82
"War"
Writer Marv Wolfman
Artist Perez
Inker Romeo Tanghal
Cover Perez
25pp

#26, Dec '82
"Runaways"
Writer Marv Wolfman
Artist Perez
Inker Romeo Tanghal
Cover Perez
23pp

#27, Jan '83
"Runaways Part Two"
Writer Marv Wolfman
Artist Perez
Inker Romeo Tanghal
Cover Perez
23pp

#28, Feb '83
"Terra in the Night"
Writer Marv Wolfman
Artist Perez
Inker Romeo Tanghal



Cover: Perez
23pp

#29, Mar '83
"First Blood"
Writer: Marv Wolfman
Artist: Perez
Inker: Romeo Tanghal
Cover: Perez
23pp

#30, Apr '83
"Nightmare"
Writer: Marv Wolfman
Artist: Perez
Inker: Romeo Tanghal
Cover: Perez
23pp

#31, May '83
"Inferno"
Writer: Marv Wolfman
Artist: Perez
Inker: Romeo Tanghal
Cover: Perez
24pp

#32, Jun '83
"Thunder and Lightning"
Writer: Marv Wolfman
Artist: Perez
Inker: Romeo Tanghal
Cover: Perez
24pp

#33, Jul '83
"Who Killed Trident?"
Writer: Marv Wolfman
Artist: Perez
Inker: Romeo Tanghal
Cover: Perez
23pp

#34, Aug. '83
"Endings and Beginnings"
Writer: Marv Wolfman
Artist: Perez
Inker: Romeo Tanghal
Cover: Perez
23pp

#35, Oct. '83
Cover: Perez

#36, Nov. '83
Cover: Perez

#37, Dec '83
"Lights Out Everyone"
Writer: Marv Wolfman
Artist: Perez
Inker: Romeo Tanghal
Cover: Perez
24pp.

#38, Jan. '84
"Who Is Donna Troy?"
Writer: Marv Wolfman
Artist: Perez
Inker: Romeo Tanghal
Cover: Perez
23pp

#39, Feb '84
"Cross-Roads"
Writer: Marv Wolfman
Artist: Perez
Inker: Perez
Cover: Perez
23pp

#40, Mar '84
"Lifeblood"
Writer: Marv Wolfman
Artist: Perez
Inker: Perez/Tanghal
Cover: Perez
23pp

New Teen Titans (Vol. II)

#1, Aug. '84
"Shadows in the Dark"
Writer: Marv Wolfman
Artist: Perez
Inker: Perez
Cover: Perez
23pp

#2, Oct '84
"She Is Mine"
Writer: Marv Wolfman
Artist: Perez
Inker: Perez
Cover: Perez
24pp

#3, Nov. '84
"Souls as White as Heaven as Black as Hell"
Writer: Marv Wolfman
Artist: Perez
Inker: Romeo Tanghal
Cover: Perez
23pp

#4, Jan '85
" Torment"
Writer: Marv Wolfman
Artist: Perez
Inker: Romeo Tanghal
Cover: Perez
23pp

#5, Feb. '85
"The Terror of Trigon"
Writer: Marv Wolfman
Artist: Perez
Inker: Romeo Tanghal
Cover: Perez
23pp

#6, Mar '85
Cover: Perez

#7, Apr '85
Cover: Perez

New Teen Titans Annual

#1 1982
"Final Conflict"
Writer: Marv Wolfman
Artist: Perez
Inker: Romeo Tanghal
Cover: Perez
39pp
3 original Titans illos by Perez

#2 1983
"The Murder Machine"
Writer: Marv Wolfman
Artist: Perez
Inker: Pablo Marcos
Cover: Perez
42pp

#3 1984
"Finale!"
Writer: Marv Wolfman
Artist: Perez
Inker: Dick Giordano/Mike DeCarlo
Cover: Perez
40pp

New Teen Titans Drug Issue

#1 1983
"Plaque"
Writer: Marv Wolfman

Artist: Perez
Inker: Dick Giordano
Cover: Perez/ Giordano
27pp
1-page illo of Titans on back cover

#2, 1983
1-page illo of Titans on on back cover

New Teen Titans Drug Benefit Issue
#1 1983
Reprints free drug issue cited above

#2, 1984
1-page illo of Titans on back cover

Star Trek

#1 Feb '84
Cover: Perez

#2, Mar '84
Cover: Perez

#3, Apr '84
Inker: Romeo Tanghal

Superman
#364, Oct. '81
Cover: Perez/Dick Giordano

SwordQuest

#1, 1982
"Earthworld"
Writers: Roy Thomas/Gerry Conway
Artist: Perez
Inker: Dick Giordano
Covers: Perez
49pp

#2, 1982
"Fireworld"
Writers: Roy Thomas/Gerry Conway
Artist: Perez
Inker: Dick Giordano
Covers: Perez
49pp

#3, 1983
"Waterworld"
Writers: Roy Thomas/Gerry Conway
Artist: Perez
Inker: Dick Giordano
Covers: Perez

Tales of the New Teen Titans

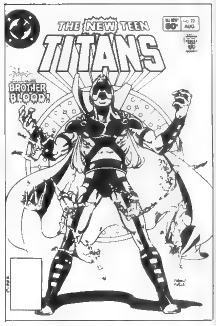
#41, Apr. '84
"Baptism of Blood"
Writer: Marv Wolfman
Artist: Perez
Inker: Romeo Tanghal
Cover: Perez
23pp

#42, May '84
"The Eyes of Terra Markov"
Writer: Marv Wolfman
Artist: Perez
Inker: Dick Giordano
Cover: Perez
23pp

#43, Jun '84
"Betrayal"
Writer: Marv Wolfman
Artist: Perez
Inker: Mike DeCarlo/Dick Giordano
Cover: Perez
23pp.

#44, Jul '84
"There Shall Come a Titan"
Writer: Marv Wolfman
Artist: Perez
Inker: Mike DeCarlo/Dick Giordano
Cover: Perez
25pp

#45, Aug '84
"Old Friends ...and New"
Writer: Marv Wolfman



Artist: Perez
Inker: Mike DeCarlo
Cover: Perez
23pp.

#46, Sept. '84
"Showdown"
Writer: Marv Wolfman
Artist: Perez
Inker: Mike DeCarlo
Cover: Perez
23pp

#47, Oct. '84
"Final Conflict"
Writer: Marv Wolfman
Artist: Perez
Inker: Mike DeCarlo
Cover: Perez
23pp.

#48, Nov. '84
"Epilogue One, Two and Three"
Writer: Marv Wolfman
Artist: Perez
Inker: Mike DeCarlo
Cover: Perez
6pp

#49, Dec. '84
"Prologues and Epilogues"
Writer: Marv Wolfman
Artist: Perez
Inker: Mike DeCarlo
Cover: Perez
7pp
1-page illo of Donna and Terry by Perez

#50, Feb. '85
"We Are Gathered Here Today"
Writer: Marv Wolfman
Artist: Perez
Inker: Mike DeCarlo/Dick Giordano
Cover: Perez
40pp.

#51, Mar '85
Cover: Perez

#52, Apr '85
Cover: Perez

#53, May '85
Cover: Perez

Tales of the New Teen Titans Annual

#3, 1984
"Finale"
Writer: Marv Wolfman
Artist: Perez
Inker: Mike DeCarlo/Dick Giordano
Cover: Perez
40pp

Tales of the Titans

#1, Jun '82
"Cyborg"
Writer: Marv Wolfman
Artist: Perez
Inker: Brett Breeding
Cover: Perez
25pp
1-page illo of Cyborg

#2, Jul. '82
"Raven"
Writer: Marv Wolfman
Artist: Perez
Inker: Pablo Marcos
Cover: Perez
25pp
1-page illo of Raven

#3, Aug '82
"Changeling"
Writer: Marv Wolfman
Artist: Perez
Inker: Gene Day
Cover: Perez
25pp
1-page illo of Changeling

#4, Sept '82
"Starfire"
Writer: Marv Wolfman
Artist: Perez
Inker: Ernie Colon
Cover: Perez
25pp
1-page illo of Starfire

Who's Who in the DC Universe

#1, Mar. '85
Cover: Perez
1-page illo of Aqualad/Aquagirl by Perez

#2, Apr. '85
Cover: Perez
1-page shot of Blackfire by Perez

#3, May '85
Cover: Perez/Giordano
1-page shot of Brother Blood
2-page shot of Brotherhood of Evil

#4, Jun. '85
Cover: Perez/Giordano
1-page shot of Changeling
1-page shot of Cheshire, both by Perez and Romeo Tanghal

#5, Jul '85
Cover: Perez/Giordano
1-page illo of Cyborg by Perez and Tanghal

Wonder Woman

#283, Sept. '81
Cover: Perez/Dick Giordano

#284 Oct. '81
Cover: Perez/Dick Giordano

#300, Feb. '83
Inside front cover: 1-page illo of Wonder Woman

World's Finest

#271, Sept. '81
Cover: Perez

#276, Feb '82
Cover: Perez

#277, Mar '82
Cover: Perez/Tod Smith

#278, Apr '82
Cover: Perez/Romeo Tanghal

#300, Feb '84
"Evil"
Writer: Marv Wolfman
Artist: Perez
Inker: Perez
4pp

AMERICOMICS

Americomics

#1, Apr '82
Cover: Perez

PACIFIC COMICS

Alien Worlds

#7, Apr '84
"Ride the Blue Bus"
Writer: Bruce Jones
Artist: Perez
Inker: Perez
6pp

Vanguard Illustrated

#6, Jun '84
"The Trains Belong to Us"
Writer: Joey Cavaleri
Artist: Perez
Inker: Perez
Cover: Perez
4pp

RENEGADE PRESS

normalman

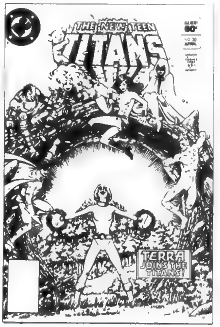
#11, Oct. '85
Back cover: Perez/Valentino

DELUXE COMICS

Wally Wood's T.H.U.N.D.E.R. Agents

#1, Feb '85
"The Raven"
Writer: Dann Thomas
Artist: Perez
Inker: Perez
Cover: Perez
10pp

#2, Mar '85
"The Cruelest Cut"
Writer: Dann Thomas
Artist: Perez
Inker: Perez/Bill Wray
Covers: Perez
10pp
2-page centerfold of Iron Maiden



1-page shot of Menthor

MAGAZINES AND CALENDAR ILLUSTRATIONS

Bizarre Adventures

#27, Jul '81
"Winter Carnival"
Writer: Mary Jo Duffy
Artist: Perez
Inker: Alfredo Alcala
17pp.

Deadly Hands of Kung Fu

#6, Nov. '74
"The Way of the Jackal"
Writer. Jim Dennis
Artist. Perez
Inker: Frank Springer
15pp

#7, Dec. '74
"Tigers in a Mind Cage"
Writer: Bill Mantlo
Artist Perez
Inker: Bob McLeod
12pp.

#8, Jan. '75
"A Storm of Vengeance"
Writer Bill Mantlo
Artist. Perez
Inker Al Milgrom
15pp

#9. Feb '75
"Slaughter in Central Park"
Writer Bill Mantlo
Artist: Perez
Inker: Mike Esposito
15pp.

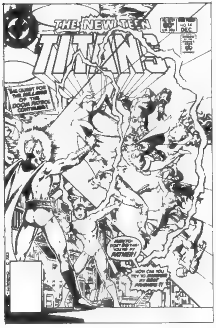
#10, Mar. '75
"They Who Dwell Within"
Writer: Bill Mantlo
Artist Perez
Inker: Mike Esposito
15pp

#11, Apr. '75
"Gladiators in the Crypt of Tomorrow"
Writer Bill Mantlo
Artist Perez
Inker: Tony DeZuniga
15pp.

#12, May '75
"Crack of the Whip"
Writer: Bill Mantlo
Artist. Perez
Inker: Rico Rival
15pp.

#13, Jun '75
"Death Is My Co-Star"
Writer Bill Mantlo
Artist: Perez
Inker: Jack Abel
16pp

#14, Jul. '75
"The Valley of Ancestors"
Writer: Bill Mantlo



Artist. Perez
Inker: Dan Adkins
16pp.

#16, Sept. '75
"The Rites of Every Citizen"
Writer. Bill Mantlo
Artist. Perez
Inker: Steve Gan
15pp.

#17, Oct '75
"Politics of Death"
Writer Bill Mantlo
Artist: Perez
Inker. Jack Abel
17pp.

#19, Dec '75
"An Ending"

Writer. Bill Mantlo
Artist: Perez
Inker. Jack Abel
17pp.

#20, Jan. '76
"A Beginning"
Writer. Bill Mantlo
Artist: Perez
Inker Jack Abel
20pp

#22, Mar. '76
Writer. Bill Mantlo
Artist: Perez
Inker: Jack Abel
22pp.

#24, May '76
"Three Misses"
Writers: Robert Fuentes/Piers Anthony
Artist: Perez
Inker: Terry Austin
5pp.
Also illustrations with text story

#30, Nov '76
"Threads of Evil . . .Web of Hate"
Writer: Bill Mantlo
Artist. Perez
Inker: Sonny Trinidad
18pp

Haunt of Horror

#5, Jan '75
"Next issue" advertisement

Marvel Calendars

Sept. 1977
Oct. 1978
Oct 1979
Jul. 1980 (Dr. Strange and the Defenders)
Aug. 1981 (The Avengers, inker: Gene Day)

Marvel Preview

#12, Fall '77
Writer: Steve Gerber
Artist. Perez
Inker: Pablo Marcos
2pp

#20, Winter, '80
Reprints "War Toy" from Unknown Worlds of S.F. #2
1-page illo of War Toy

Marvel Super Special

#4, Aug. 1978
"The Beatles Story"
Writer: David A. Kraft
Artist: Perez
Inker: Klaus Janson
Covers: Perez/Palmer
39pp.

#7, Jan. '79
"Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band"
(Only published in Japan—Perez has never

seen a copy of it)
Cover Perez (sketch)

Marvel Treasury Edition

#26 1980
"At the Sign of the Lion"
Writer: Mary Jo Duffy
Artist: Ken Landgraf
Inker: Perez
6pp

Monsters Unleashed

#7, Aug. '74
1 page illo of Gullivar Jones

#8 Oct. '74
"A Martian Genesis"
Plot: Tony Isabella
Script: Doug Moench
Artist: Perez
Inkers: Duffy Vohland/Rich Buckler
14pp

National Lampoon

Mar. 1979
Jul. 1979
Jan. 1980

National Lampoon's 10th Anniversary

#2

Planet of the Apes (British weekly)

#10
Cover: Perez

Science Digest

Oct. '75 (2pp.)
Nov. '75 (2½pp.)
Jan. '76 (1pp.)
Pencilled and inked by Perez

Unknown Worlds of Science Fiction

#2, Apr. '75
"War Toy"
Writer: Tony Isabella
Artist: Perez
Inker: Rico Rival
12pp

#3, May '75
"Occupation Force"
Writers: Frank Herbert/Gerry Conway
Artist: Perez
Inker: Klaus Janson
5pp

FANZINES AND MAGAZINES

Amazing Heroes

#2, Jul. '81
Cover: Perez

#50, Jul. '84
Cover: Perez
9pp. interview with Perez
2pp. art by Perez

#66 Feb. 15, 1985
Cover: Perez
Article on Crisis on Infinite Earths
7pp. interview with Perez

Atari Age

#3, Sept./Oct. '82
(Swordquest Issue)
Cover: Perez/Ernie Colon
Photo reproductions of Swordquest T-shirts

Atlanta Con Program Book
1980

Best of Amazing Heroes

#1, 1982
Cover: Perez

Chain Reaction (British)

#4, Spring, '84
8pp. interview with Perez and Wolfman

Comic Press

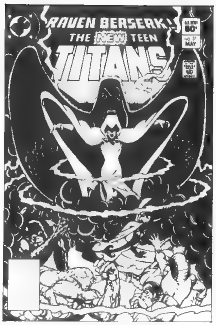
#2, 1976
11pp. Perez interview
5 illustrations

Comic Times

#3, Nov. '80
Cover: Perez
18pp. interview with Perez

Comics Collector

#3, Spring, '84
Cover: Perez
4pp. interior illos by Perez



Comics Feature

#19, 1981
Cover: Perez

Comics Interview

#3, May '83
6pp. unpublished spot illos of Titans

#6 Aug. '83
Cover: Perez
6pp. art from JLA/Avengers Team-up by Perez
7pp. interview

#20, Feb. '85
1 page illo of Raven by Perez

Comics Journal

#79, Jan. '83
12pp. interview with Perez

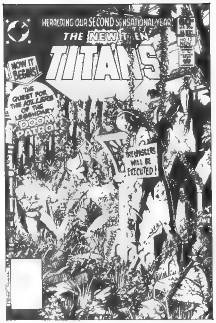
#80, Mar. '83
13pp. interview with Perez

Comics Scene

#7, Jan. '82
Cover: Perez
9pp. interview with Perez

Conjure

#1, 1974
"The Legend of Kazo-Nai"
Writer: Perez
Artist: Perez
Inker: Perez
5pp
"The Dark Tower"
Writer: Tom Sciacca
Inkers: Perez/Jim Glenn/Sciacca
9pp
Cover: Perez


HERALDING OUR SECOND SENSATIONAL YEAR!
THE NEW TEEN
TITANS
NOW IT BEGINS!
THE QUEST FOR THE SOULS OF THE 1000000 DEAD!
TRAGEDY WILL BE ECSTASY!

1-page illo of a swordsman by Sciacca/Perez

Creation Con Program Book
1976-77
Promotional art

DC Coming Attractions

#80, Jul '83
Original character sketches of Vigilante

Factors Unknown

#2, 1971
"Death Squad"
Art and Story Perez
8pp

#3, 1972
Art and story Perez
8pp

Fans of Central Jersey

#2
Perez interview

The Fan's Zine

#7, 1979
Interview with Perez, adapted from an interview in AFTA

#8, 1979
Second part of Perez interview adapted from AFTA

Fantaco Chronicles

#2, Feb '82
1-page illo of the Fantastic Four by Perez

#3, Apr '82
1-page illo of Daredevil by Perez

#4, Jun. '82
Cover Perez

F.O.O.M
#19, Fall '77
Cover Perez/Joe Sinnott

#20, Winter '78
Cover. Perez/Joe Sinnott

#22, Summer '79
Cover: Perez/Joe Sinnott

Great Krypton!

1979
Cover: Perez
(Superman and Supergirl)

Heroes Aren't Hard to Find Convention Program Book
1982
Cover reprints the 1982 Charlotte Mini-Con poster and flyer of the Titans' heads

Heroes Convention Program Book
1984
1-page illo of Wonder Girl and Starfire

Hot Shot

#1, 1974
"The Deadly Sparklers"
Writer. Perez
Cover Perez (pencils, inks, and colors)
Artist Perez
Inker Bob Garrison
Front Cover: Perez/John Glenn
Back Cover: Perez
1-page text by Perez
1-page illo by Perez/John Glenn

Hot Stuf
#1, 1974
"Uncle Sal and Cousin John Go Planet Tripping"
Writer Perez
Artist Perez

Houston Fantasy Festival Program
1980
Spot illo

Mile High Futures

#9, Sept. '84
3pp interview with Perez

New Issue Club Express

#107, Dec. '81
4pp pencilled art

#117, Oct '82
Cover Perez
11pp interview with Perez
5 spot illos—Robin/Starfire, Taskmaster, Robin, Axa, Starfire

Oracle

#1, 1978
"Death Star"
Writer David Lillard
Artist Perez
Inker: Mike Higgins
30pp

Perez—Accent on the First 'E'
1977
Cover. Perez
9pp. interview
37 full-page illustrations. 16 partial-page illustrations either done expressly for the book or reprinted from elsewhere. A page from Accent is reprinted on page 29 of Comics Interview #16

The Rising Sun

#5, Aug. 10, '69
1-page illustration by Perez

San Diego Comic Con Program
1981
T-shirt illustration, a super-family at the beach
1983

Starcon 3 Program Book
1975
1-page illo of She-Devils

Teachers' Trilogy
1972
"Stranded"
Writer Tom Sciacca
Artist. Perez
Inker: Tom Sciacca
4pp

TitanTalk

#6, '84
Cover Perez

#8, May, '84
1-page illo of Starfire

#14, May '85
1-page illo of Jericho
Pencils Perez
Inker Rob Liefeld

POSTERS

Enter the Dragon
1974

Black Bolt
1976

New Teen Titans (#24)
1982

Charlotte Mini-Con Poster (1982)
Flyer/poster of a double "T" with the Titans' heads

New Teen Titans (#30)
1983

New Teen Titans Drug Poster
1983

N.T.T./Outsiders Team-Up
1984
(Cover of NTT #37, Batman and the Outsiders #5)

New Teen Titans (#1, Vol II.)
1984

New Teen Titans Collectors
1984

Scarlet Witch Poster
1977
(An order form for Accent is on the bottom of the poster

Heroes Convention
1984
Unused cover of Titans #8

Iron Maiden
1985

Menthor
1985

PORTFOLIOS

Heroes, Heavies, and Heroines
1982
1-page illo of Hawkeye by Perez/Bill Black

Justice Machine Portfolio
1982
1 page illo of Titan by Perez/Romeo Tanghal

Limited Edition Portfolio
1977
Numbered to 425 8 plates and slipcover by Perez, taken from non-copyrighted art on Accent on the First 'E'

Marvel Team-Up Portfolio
#2, 1982
One plate with X-Men titles "All Against the

Lords of Light and Darkness" by Perez

Pretty Girl Sketchbook
1981
One page of Storm (?) by Perez/Bill Black

MISCELLANEOUS

Anti-Drug Program
1983
Cover for brochure

Batman postcard
1984

Camp Rising Sun
1969
1-page illustration
Perez's first published work

Boy Scouts of America Seatbelt Safety Program
1982
Art by Perez and Joe Orlando

DC Comics Subscription Form
1983

DC Style Guide
Teen Titans character sheets

Fantastic Four Wraparound 7-11 Cup
1978
Fantastic Four fighting Dr Doom

Elson's Presents
#3, Jan '81
Reprints Titans #3, "The Fearsome Five"

Deluxe Comics Flyer
1984
Iron Maiden cover

Dial "H" for Hero Entry Form
Two figures in silhouette

Heroes Convention Notepads
1983
Pre-origin picture picture of Vigilante on all of approximately 25 of the sheets. The picture was reprinted in the Heroes Catalog #11 (July 1983)

J.L.A. Postcards
1984
15 postcards by Perez

From "Swordquest"

Nabisco Cookies Box
Art by Perez/Giordano

New Teen Titans Anti-Drug T-Shirt
1984
Reprints back cover of 1983 anti-drug book

New Teen Titans Buttons
1985
2½ inches in width
Artist: Perez
Inker: Mike DeCarlo

New Teen Titans Drug Promo Package
1983
Misc. art from Drug books
Pin-up reprinted

New Teen Titans Painter's Cap
1984
8 illos of the Titans

New Teen Titans Paperback
#1, 1983
Tor Books
Reprints Titans #1—6

Shrapnel
Record album. Perez did a small illustration on the back of the album

Spiderwoman
Presentation pieces for the TV cartoon series

Swordquest: Earthworld T-Shirt
1983

Swordquest: Fireworld T-Shirt
1983

Swordquest: Waterworld T-Shirt
1984

San Diego Comic Con T-Shirt
1983

The T.H.U.N.D.E.R Agents and Foes
1985
Writer: Jack Herman
Artist: Perez
Inker: Perez
Cover: Perez
Role-playing game by Fantasy Games Unlimited

T.H.U.N.D.E.R. Agents T-Shirt
1985
Reprints the cover to Wally Wood's T.H.U.N.D.E.R Agents #1

"Titans Tower" Letter-Column
1980
Lettercol design: Perez

Zatanna's costume
Current design: Perez

UPCOMING PROJECTS

DC Challenge
#12
Writer: Marv Wolfman
Artist: Perez
Inker: Terry Austin
Cover: Perez

History of the DC Universe
Three issues, 1985-86
Writer: Marv Wolfman
Artist: Perez
Covers: Perez

UNPRINTED PROJECTS

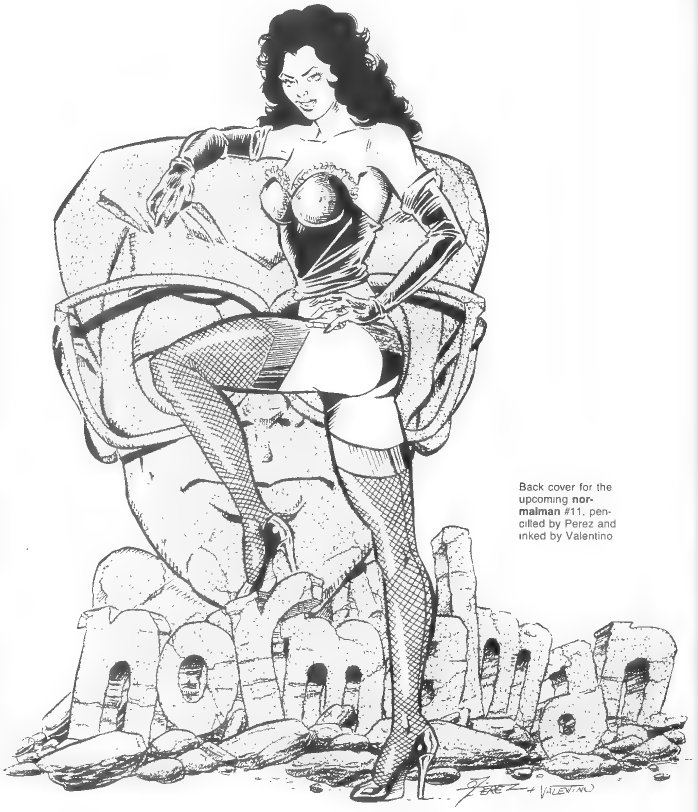
Pacific Presents
"The Mime"
Writer: Roger McKenzie
Artist: Perez
Inker: Perez
Cover: Perez
8pp

JLA/Avengers Team-Up
#1, 1984
Writers: Gerry Conway/Roy Thomas
Artist: Perez
Inker: Perez
Cover: Perez
21pp

Compiled by
Andy Mangels

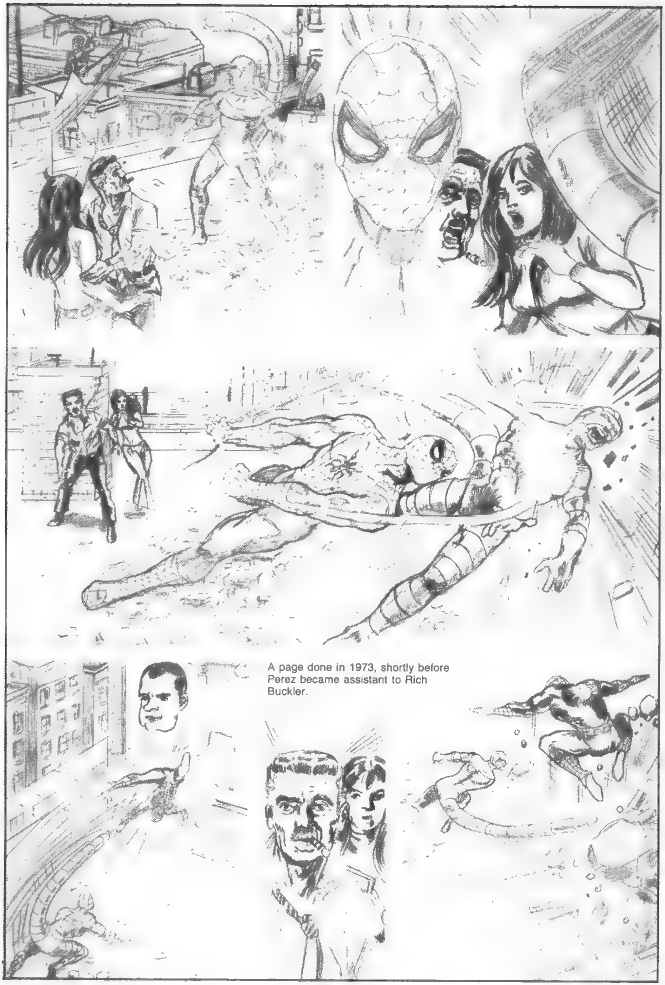
PORTFOLIO

Cover, *New Issue Club Express* #117, 10/82.



Back cover for the upcoming **normalman** #11, penciled by Perez and inked by Valentino

From the 1982 Justice Machine portfolio.



A page done in 1973, shortly before Perez became assistant to Rich Buckler.

The cover to **Crisis on Infinite Earths** #3

AN ARMY OF DEADLY METEORS HURTLES THRU SPACE THREATENING DESTRUCTION UPON EARTH AND HER INHABITANTS...
BE CALM MY CHILDREN. I'VE GOT A SECRET WEAPON THAT'LL TAKE THE STARCH OUT OF THOSE HOT ROCKS.
EARTH
WE'LL BE POUNDED FLAT!
WE'RE DOOMED
DUCK!
AS THE METEORS NEAR EARTH THEY ARE BURNED UP BY CONTACT WITH HER SECRET PROTECTION— THE ATMOSPHERE!
EARTH
WE'RE SAVED!
NOTHING CAN HARM US NOW.
HMMMM, I WONDER...

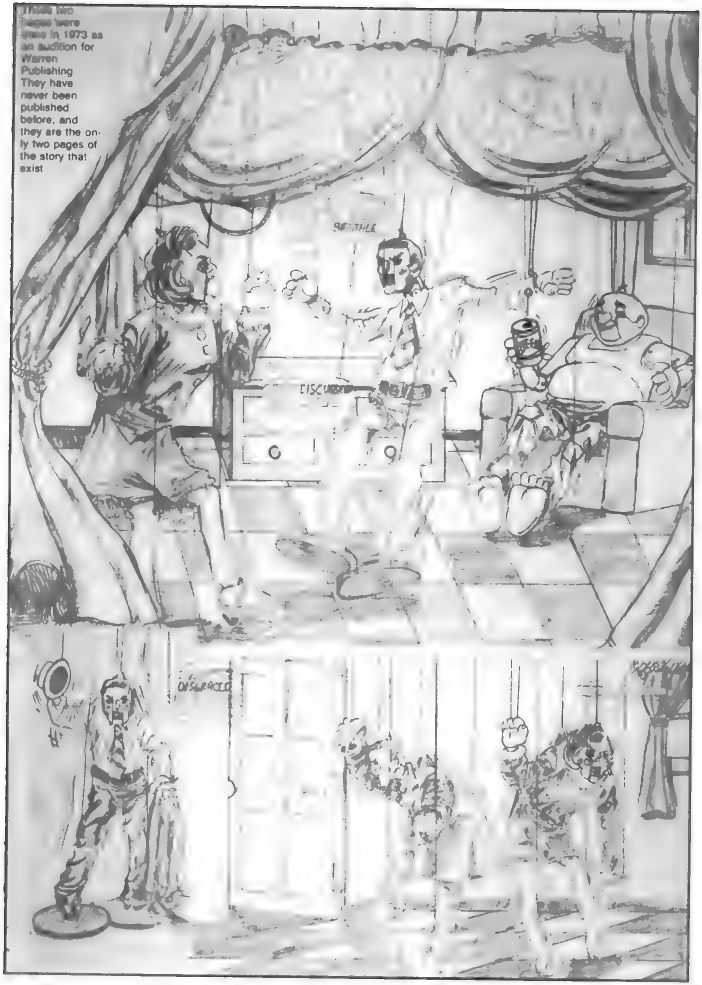
Above and right two pages for *Science Digest*

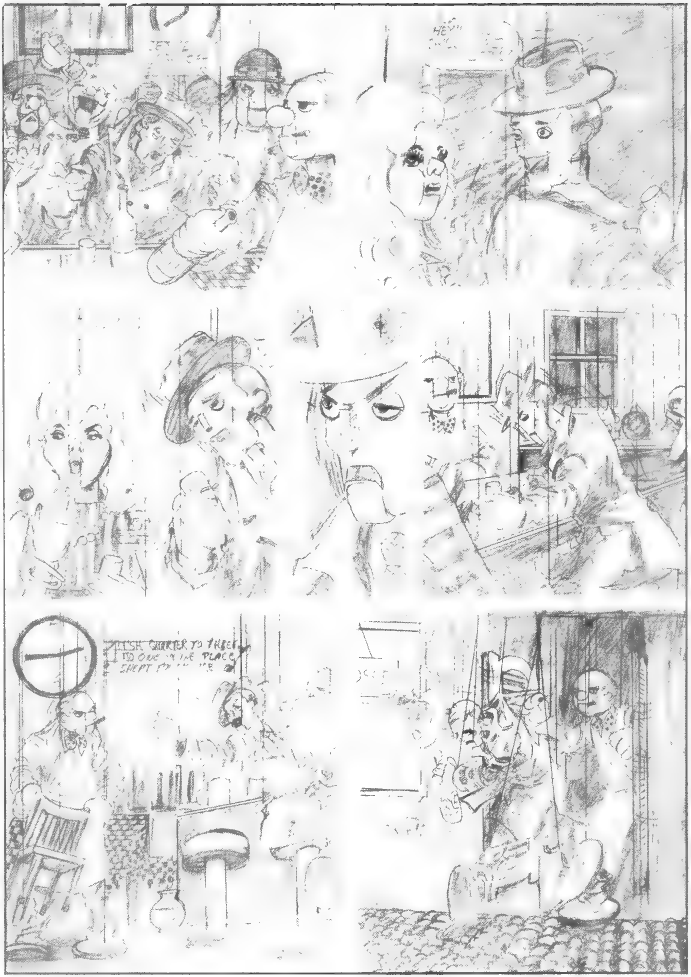
SCIENCE DIGEST PRESENTS
CADAVER COMIX
IN THE OPERATING ROOM OF A LEADING MEDICAL SCHOOL, STUDENT ERNEST N. TERN DISCUSSES A GRAVE PROBLEM WITH HIS INSTRUCTOR...
GOLLY, DR GOODBAR, WHEN AM I GOING TO GET A REAL BODY TO WORK ON?
INSTEAD OF THIS..... THIS DUMMY!!
PATIENCE, MY SON.
CADAVERS ARE VERY HARD TO COME BY THESE DAYS, YOU KNOW.
MEANWHILE, IN ANOTHER PART OF TOWN, A WINO HAS TAKEN HIS FINAL DRINK....
AARRRGGGH!!
THE POOR SOUL'S BODY IS TAKEN TO CITY HOSPITAL...
DEAD ON ARRIVAL.
GOODY! AN UNCLAIMED BODY!!

From the **Marvel Team-Up** portfolio

Page done in 1972-73 as a portfolio piece in an effort to join DC's Junior Bullpen program. Incidentally, DC decided they didn't want Perez then. How times have changed

These two pages were drawn in 1973 as an audition for Warren Publishing. They have never been published before, and they are the only two pages of the story that exist.

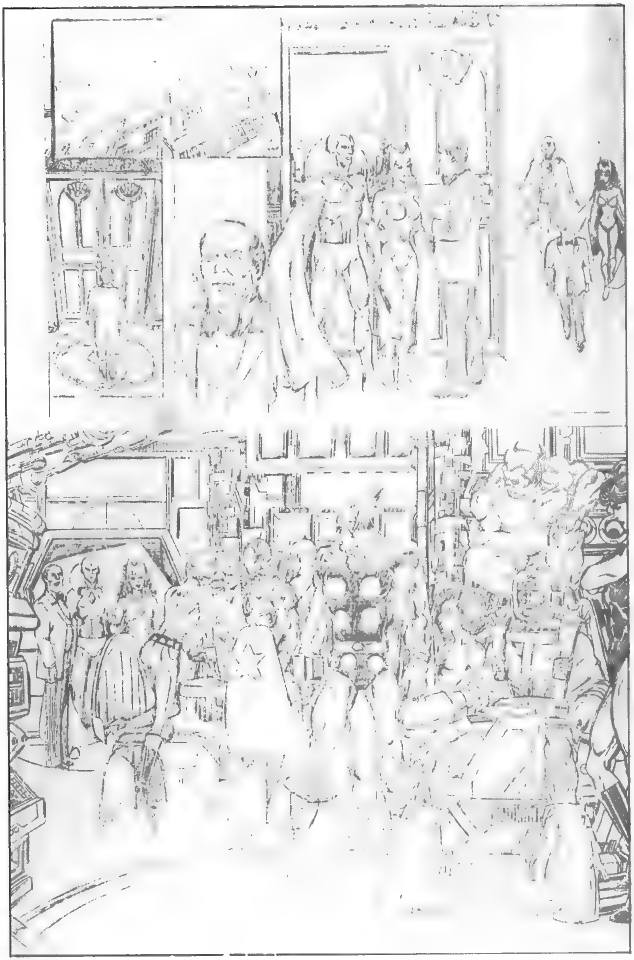


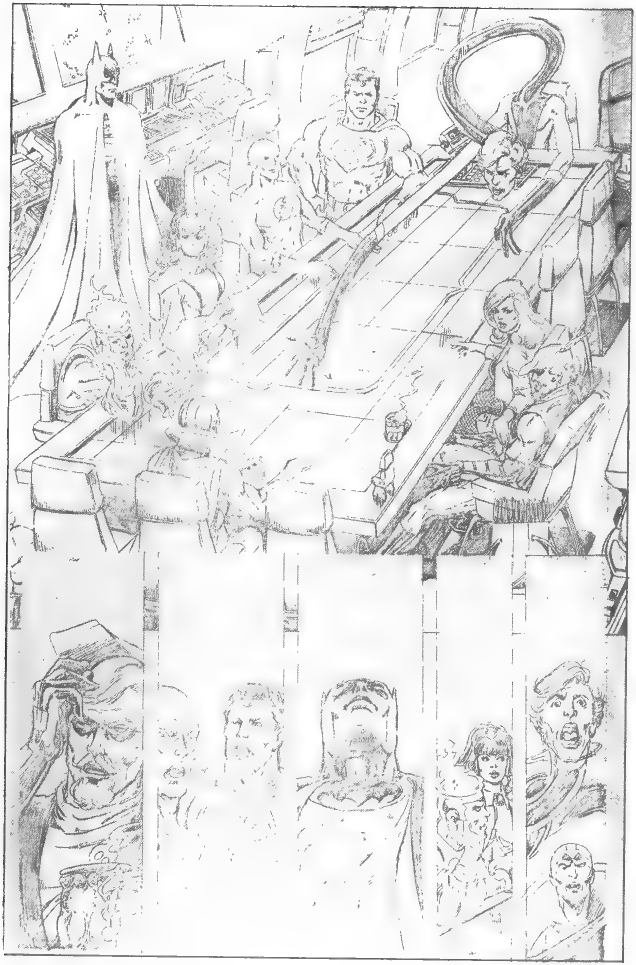

HEY!

Promotional illustration done for Mayfair Games' super-hero role playing game.

Another portfolio piece, done in 1973 while Perez was assisting Rich Buckler.

The next three pages are previously unpublished pages from the aborted *JLA/Avengers* book.





TRIVIA

Perez's first published pro work appeared in Astonishing Tales #25.

Perez has guest-starred in the following comics: Fantastic Four #176, Marvel Two-In-One #60, Deadly Hands of Kung Fu #19, New Teen Titans #20, and Tales of the Titans #50.

The Black Widow stories that apeared in Marvel Fanfare #s 10-13 (1983-'84) were actually pulled from inventory, and had been done around 1980-'81. Due to the problems surrounding the JLA/Avengers book, Perez refused to draw a cover for issue #13, and Art Adams ended up drawing the cover.

The illustration of Man-Wolf by Perez in Marvel Universe #13 was taken from Marvel Premiere #45. Perez was neither notified of the use of his art, nor was he paid for it.

Marv Wolfman's first two collaborations with Perez were in the Fantastic Four Annual #14 and What If? #15.

The Wolverine/Hercules story in Marvel Treasury Edition #26 is the only time that Perez has inked another artist's work.

The Gullivar Jones story in Monsters Unleashed #8 is Perez's first solo story in black and white. Uncredited inkers in that book are Bob Layton and John Byrne.

Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band, not to be confused with Marvel Super Special #4, was only printed in Japan.

Perez completed a werewolf story for Marvel's black-and-white magazine line. The line folded, and the story has never been printed. This is Perez's only full story never to have been published.

The first cover that Perez both pencilled and inked was Fantastic Four #194 (May, 1978).

Terry Austin has inked more Perez covers than any other inker. Besides Perez himself, that is. And Dick Giordano is in third place.

In Deadly Hands of Kung Fu #8, Perez redrew several panels originally done by Mike Vosburg. Jack Abel inked the entire story.

The writer with whom Perez has worked more often than any other is Marv Wolfman. Second place goes to Gerry Conway.

Doug Moench was the first writer Perez ever worked with, and Mike Esposito, the first inker.

Romeo Tanghal has inked more interior Perez pages than anyone else.

Creatures on the Loose #34 carried Perez's first cover pencils, with inks by John Romita.

DC Comics Presents #61, with the Superman/Omac team-up, is the only non-series book that Perez has done for DC.

On the cover of Crisis #3, Perez signed his name "Guess Who?," perhaps a nod to the covers he was drawing for another series, Who's Who.

John Byrne inked page 37 of the X-Men Annual #3 (1979), the rest of which was inked by Terry Austin.

The Lex Luthor Battle Suit was designed by Perez and was first seen in Action #544 (June, 1983). This suit design also appears on the Lex Luthor Super Powers toy. The figure's original mold was sculptured from Perez's design.

Perez's favorite characters to draw (aside from the Titans) are Iron Man, Adam Strange, Green Lantern, and Metamorpho.

Perez has said that if he could be any animal in the world, he would choose to be an octopus (presumably because he would have eight arms to draw with).

Perez co-designed the Sword-quest games, and owns creator's rights with Gerry Conway, Roy Thomas, and Atari.

Perez has done 1,586 pages of interior Titans artwork, as well as 73 covers that have exclusively featured the Titans.

Crisis on Infinite Earths #5 holds Perez's record for the number of characters on a cover, with 98 in all. This very book, Focus On: George Perez, has second place wrapped up, with 87 characters. Third place goes to Crisis #7, with 66 characters pictured. Incidentally, the two-page spread of Crisis #5 (pp. 7-8) contains 174 characters.

Perez's Crisis on Infinite Earths is not the first "Crisis" story he has drawn. Other "Crisis" stories were: Avengers #147 ("Crisis on Other-Earth"), Justice League #196 ("Countdown to Crisis"), and Justice League #197 ("Crisis in Limbo").

by Andy Mangels

Credits

p.5,6 © 1985 Marvel Comics Group
p.7 photo by Mike Catron
p.9 © 1984 DC Comics Inc.
p.11,12,13 © 1985 George Perez
p.14 © 1975 James Glenn
p.15 © 1974 Sal Quartuccio
p.16,17 © 1978 Omnibus Publishing
p.18 © 1985 DC Comics Inc.
p.19,20 © 1981 DC Comics Inc.
p.21-23 © 1984 DC Comics Inc.
p.24-33 © 1985 DC Comics Inc
p.34 © 1985 21st Century Communications
p.35 © 1985 George Perez
p.36 © 1984 Bruce Jones Associates and George Perez
p.37 © 1985 George Perez
p.39 © 1985 DC Comics Inc.
p.40-45 © 1985 Marvel Comics Group
p.46-48 © 1980 DC Comics Inc.
p.49 © 1981 DC Comics Inc.
p.50 © 1983 DC Comics Inc.
p.51 © 1983 DC Comics Inc. (top)
© 1984 DC Comics Inc. (bottom)
p.52,55 © 1984 DC Comics Inc.
p.56,57 © 1985 DC Comics Inc.
p.58© 1981 DC Comics Inc.
p.59 © 1985 Marvel Comics Group
p.60 © 1961 DC Comics Inc. (top)
© 1983 DC Comics Inc. (bottom)
p.61 © 1982 DC Comics Inc.
p.62 © 1980 DC Comics Inc.
p.64-77 © 1985 Marvel Comics Group
p.78-86 © 1985 Marvel Comics Group
p.87 © 1985 Marvel Comics Group
© 1984 DC Comics Inc.
p.88-90 © 1984 DC Comics Inc.
p.91 © 1983 DC Comics Inc.
p.92 © 1984 DC Comics Inc.
p.93 © 1982 DC Comics Inc.
p.94,95 © 1983 DC Comics Inc.
p.96 © 1982 DC Comics Inc.
p.97 © 1982 Express Newspapers Ltd.
© 1983 DC Comics Inc.
p.98 © 1981 DC Comics Inc.
© 1985 Marvel Comics Group
p.99 © 1982 DC Comics Inc.
© 1983 Atari, Inc.
p.101 © 1985 DC Comics Inc.
p.102 ©1985 Valentino & George Perez
p.103 © 1982 Noble Comics
p.104 characters © 1985 Marvel Comics Group
p.105 © 1985 DC Comics Inc.
p.108 © 1982 Sal Q. Productions
p.109 characters © 1985 DC Comics Inc.
p.112 © 1985 DC Comics Inc.
p.113 characters © 1985 Marvel Comics Group
p.114-116 © 1984 DC Comics Inc. and Marvel Comics Group
p.117 © Deluxe Comics

Dancing
Everywoman's Health